

THE  
LONDON READER  
of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1333.—VOL. LII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 17, 1888.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A STRUGGLE TO THE DEATH!]

## ROSALIND'S VOW.

### CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

THE lawless passion which Rosalind's beauty had aroused in the heart of Pierce Vansittart was increased with absence rather than diminished, and her scornful contempt of his vows of love and marked avoidance of himself gave a zest to his pursuit of her which might otherwise have been lacking.

During the time she was nursing her husband at Weir Cottage he found no opportunity of seeing her, and her departure was so suddenly arranged that he had no idea she contemplated leaving until after she was absolutely gone. Then he took steps towards ascertaining her whereabouts; but they were fruitless; and as we know, it was Captain Marchant who finally gave him her address.

The next day he boldly called at the house in the Euston road, and made inquiries; but he was told the lady had gone out the pre-

ceding morning, and had not yet returned. However, he was determined not to neglect any chance of finding her, so he set his valet—a man as unscrupulous as his master—to watch the house, with the result that a few days later the man saw Rosalind enter, and afterwards followed her down to her new home.

It was his footsteps that Claud had heard and traced.

On his return to London he acquainted Vansittart with his success, and then added,—

"I fancy, sir, that we have not only run the lady to earth but someone else as well!"

"Someone else! Whom do you mean, Seamer?"

The valet, who was partially in his master's confidence, came a little nearer, and dropped his voice to a familiar whisper.

"I mean your wife, sir."

"Good Heavens!" cried Vansittart, really surprised. "Do you mean you saw my wife?"

"No; but I saw Mr. Trevelyan. He was at the station to meet the lady. Perhaps I should not have recognized him if I had not heard his voice, for he was so muffled up that it was

impossible to catch a glimpse of his face. But directly I heard him speak I knew him. It is impossible to mistake his tones."

"And did you make inquiries?"

"I did, sir. First of all, I followed the two until they went in at a gate leading to a house that I should easily know again. Then I turned back and went into the nearest public-house. There I learnt that Mr. and Mrs. Stuart—mother and son—had been living at the White House for nearly three months. The lady was never seen, and the gentleman but seldom. The household consisted of one man—a foreigner. After that I had no doubts on the subject."

"You are a clever fellow, Seamer, and I'll take care you don't go unrewarded," said his master, with genuine admiration. After a pause, he added, "What sort of a house is this White House? Are there many trees about?"

"A good many shrubs, sir, I think; but it was too dark for me to see much."

"Do you think I could take a look round without running any risk of being seen?"

Seamer thought for a moment.

"I couldn't say, sir. Better let me go down



if you want anything done. I shall be less likely to be recognised than you."

"Well," responded Vansittart, reflectively. "I don't want to make any mistake. It would be awkward if when I took a warrant down for my wife's apprehension as an escaped lunatic I found I had not got the real Simon Pure. Thanks for your offer, Seamer, but I think I'll go down myself. I am pretty quick at getting out of the way if there's danger."

So by the first train the following morning Mr. Vansittart arrived at the White House, and made a careful examination of the premises before even the servant was up. Then he ensconced himself behind a group of shrubs opposite one of the lower windows, and some time later had the satisfaction of seeing his blind wife throw some crumbs out to the birds—as was her usual custom.

He noticed that when she withdrew she pulled the window to, but did not fasten it, and then he cautiously advanced, under cover of the shrubs, and peered in. But the blind was drawn, and he dared not pull it on one side, for fear of the noise being heard. It was at that juncture Claud entered, and Vansittart, who was as bold as he was unscrupulous, remained outside the window, listening to the conversation that ensued, and trusting to his wits for getting away in case of discovery.

He stayed there until Claud left the room to fetch the dog; then, having learned a good deal, he walked swiftly back to the station again, revolving many plans in his mind as he went.

He had not seen Rosalind, but that mattered little, for now his primary object was to secure his wife, which meant securing her fortune. After that was effected, there would still be time enough to let Lady Hareley see that he had not forgotten her.

But the mention of the buried box had forced him to alter his plans. That, at all hazards, must be secured, and without loss of time, for if it once got into Claud Trevelyan's hands it might be difficult to compel him to give it up. Vansittart's brows knitted themselves together in a heavy frown as he ruminated on the pros and cons of the matter.

"The box is at the Cedars—buried somewhere in the garden. So much seems clear," he muttered; "but the chances are ten to one against my hitting on the precise spot where it lies, unless I have something to guide me. No; I cannot manage it alone. I must follow Trevelyan down there, and watch him. He must be my guide. Ha—ha! I wonder what he would say if he knew that I destined this office for him—the jackal, who shall hunt for the lion—the cat's paw that is to draw the hot chestnuts out of the fire!"

He laughed aloud at the reflection, but his hilarity was of short duration, for he had to think out the position, and decide on his plan of action. Even if he did follow Claud, and watch him while he unearthed the treasure, there still remained the task of wresting it from his possession, and to do this, as Vansittart knew, would be no easy matter.

A dark look came in his eyes. He was thinking of a tiny revolver lying in its case in his breast-pocket—a pretty-looking silver-mounted toy that seemed made for ornament, not for use. But he knew that the seemingly innocent toy could be put to a deadly use; and though he had no desire for Claud's life, he was quite determined that nothing should stand in the way of the wealth he had striven so hard, and plotted so deeply, to get.

"I have no wish to kill him, but if he shows fight I must disable him," he muttered. "After all, I have a right to the money—not he; and when it is once in my possession I must turn my attention to my charming wife—course her!" He ground his teeth together as he thought of Nona, then a wicked, entering smile curved his handsome lips.

"A children's hospital you are going to build, are you, my lady? I am afraid your wish is doomed to disappointment. Your nephew's money will be devoted to far different purposes. Pahaw! I wonder why the thought of

the child Willie haunts me so? I fancied my conscience, or what in me does duty for one, was pretty well hardened by this time."

In order to run no risk of being seen by Claud, Vansittart resolved to be at the Cedars before he arrived, and accordingly caught the midday train from Paddington. Luckily, for his purpose, the afternoons were very short, and it was already dark when he arrived at Crowthorne station. As it was Christmas time there were more passengers than usual, and for this he was thankful, as he passed unnoticed in the throng.

Before leaving London he had provided himself with a map of the country, in order to find his way to the Cedars without making inquiries. He was a far-seeing gentleman, and he was not quite sure what wents might follow this night's work; therefore it behooved him to take every precaution in his power.

He ran no risk in entering the grounds of the Cedars, for, as we know, the house was pretty well surrounded by trees and shrubs, and it was quite easy to lie concealed amongst them, and feel almost secure from discovery; but the task he had set himself had its disadvantages.

The night was cold, and, despite his thick ulster, Vansittart was almost frozen. He dared not walk up and down, so as to keep up his circulation, for fear of being seen; and, although he several times had recourse to a flask of brandy which he carried in his pocket, the spirit was powerless to nullify the effect of the raw, winter air.

He was enabled to guess the time of Claud's arrival from hearing the door bang, and afterwards, seeing extra lights flashing in one or two of the windows; and he judged it must be somewhere about eight o'clock. He dared not strike a match to look at his watch, for fear of being seen, for he was close to the house, and in such a position that no one could leave it without his knowing it.

It must have been some little while after midnight when a faint, metallic sound from the direction of the plantation at the end of the garden struck on his ear. The noise it made was so slight that senses less acute than his own would not have observed it.

Vansittart was puzzled. He was quite sure Claud had not left the house by the back way, and yet the sound he had heard was such as might have been caused by a spade or mattock striking against a stone. True it was possible the young man might have gone out of the front door, and have reached the plantation through the laurel shrubbery.

This seemed to Vansittart the most likely explanation; at any rate, he determined to see whether it was a true one, and, quitting the post he had occupied for so long, he silently stole through the laurel shrubbery until he was stopped by the gleam of a light which flashed for a second across the darkness, and then disappeared.

"It is a dark lantern!" thought the watcher. "Trevelyan is cautious. He is working in the dark rather than risk discovery by keeping his lantern open."

The swift, and yet silent manner in which Vansittart slipped along might have been envied by an Indian or backwoodsman. Not the cracking of a twig or the rustling of a leaf was permitted to betray his presence; and, in a few more seconds, he was standing within eight or nine yards of the spot where the treasure lay buried.

Now he could distinctly hear the shovelling of earth; and, when his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom of the trees, he traced the outline of a man's figure, busy at work.

For some time he watched him in grim silence. He was mentally debating his own plan of action—whether he should let him work on undisturbed until he had unearthed the box, or whether he should attack him at once, and, with one blow from behind, render him insensible. He had no desire to use his pistol if it could be avoided. Even in his

hatred to his cousin Trevelyan he did not lose sight of prudence.

He finally decided on the former alternative; and, having come to this conclusion, he waited patiently while shovelful after shovelful of earth was thrown on one side.

The box was buried deep. Claud had erred on the safe side when he interred Nona's wealth.

At length the spade struck on wood, and then, for a moment, the worker threw the light of his lantern in the hole he had dug.

Vansittart could see his figure bending over it, and could hear the deep sigh of relief he breathed as he witnessed the completion of his work.

He pulled the box up, and placed it on level ground, and then paused for a few minutes to take breath. The work had fatigued him, and he was breathing hard, like a man who was unused to toil of this description.

Presently, he took from his pocket a chisel, and with it he prised off the lid of the outer box—which was long and narrow, and curiously suggestive of a child's coffin. It was at this point Vansittart sprang forward, and dealt him a tremendous blow on the head with the butt end of his revolver, which was at half-cock. But the blow, heavy and well aimed as it was, failed of its full effect, for the kneeling man swayed to one side, and the next instant was on his feet, and closed with his antagonist. As he rose, he snatched over the lantern, and darkness again reigned.

The two men were well-matched. Both were about the same height, both were strong and agile. It did not, however, take Vansittart long to discover that in actual strength, his antagonist was his superior, and he remembered that in days gone by, when he and Claud had wrestled together, the latter almost invariably threw him.

The struggle was going against him. He felt he could not keep up much longer against the tremendous physical power of the younger man! Already he was panting and striving for breath. Moreover, he dared not risk failure. The money lay at his feet—ready to his hand.

The report of a pistol rang out in the wintry air, followed by a man's cry of agony. Then all was still.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MURDER!

WHEN Edith Charlton, excited and unnerved at her recent meeting with Claud, arrived at the Manor, she found a message awaiting her from a young girl who had formerly been her maid, but who had left her some few months ago in consequence of illness. This girl lived in the next village, and her mother sent to say that she was so ill as to leave it doubtful whether she would live through the night. Her great wish was to see her young mistress before she died.

Needless to say, Edith obeyed the summons without hesitation. Simmons, her father's butler, an old and trusted servant, accompanied her, and waited in the next cottage until his mistress came out from the sick chamber.

The girl—her name was Rose West—was evidently dying, it needed no doctor to tell that; and Edith, who had never before looked on death, felt her heart brimming over with pitiful sympathy, and sat by the bedside, the invalid's hand in hers, murmuring tender words of consolation and religion.

Thus hours passed by. Simmons came in once or twice to remind his mistress of the flight of time, but Edith would not leave her post so long as those thin, damp fingers clung to hers, and the dying girl's eyes mutely besought her to remain.

At last, some time after twelve o'clock, Rose sank into a deep slumber, and then Edith took the opportunity to steal away.

"I'm sure I don't know what the Squire will say, miss," grumbled Simmons, who had the privileges of an old servant, to say what he liked.



"The Squire, in all probability, is in bed and asleep," returned Edith, with composure, "and you may be quite sure that he will approve of my having stayed with Rose."

"It's very late for a young lady to be out."

"But I have you, Simmons, and so I can't possibly come to any harm," observed Edith, coaxingly, and the butler was not proof against this pretty bit of flattery.

"Shall we go home by the road or field way, Miss Edith?" he asked. "The field way is the most lonesome, but it is a good deal shorter than the other."

"Then let us take it," Edith replied. "I don't suppose any one will molest us."

Our readers will remember that there was a short cut from Crowthorne Manor to the next village, which passed by the back of the Cedars—the same route taken by Captain Marchant when he paid his nocturnal visit to Claud's home. This was the way Simmons meant, and, accordingly, he and Edith set out across the fields.

Luckily, it was a slight frost, so the path was not muddy, as it would otherwise have been, neither was it very dark. It is true there was no moon, but the clouds had cleared off, and the stars shone out with a pale, cold lustre, sufficient to indicate the way without the aid of Simmons' lantern.

There was no wind, and the night was very still, the only sounds that broke the silence being the shrill cry of an owl every now and again, or some other night-bird in search of prey.

Edith did not speak. As a matter of fact, she was too deeply touched by the remembrance of the dying girl to think of anything else. Even Claud had slipped from her memory in face of the awful mystery of life and death that had confronted her, for she knew she should never see Rose West alive again.

Quite suddenly the report of firearms rang out on the air, bringing Edith and her companion to a standstill.

"Can it be poachers, do you think?" queried the young girl after a slight pause; but Simmons at once negatived the suggestion.

"No! It was a pistol; not a gunshot!"

"And it seemed to come from the direction of the Cedars," added Edith, in a shaken voice.

"That's just where it did come from," the butler replied, with conviction.

Edith's thoughts immediately flew to Claud, who, she fancied, would be spending the night in his old home. Could he be hurt or in danger?

All her superstitious scruples concerning the Cedars vanished—were chased away by her love and terror on Claud's behalf.

"Let us go and see what has happened," she said, swiftly. "Perhaps someone is hurt, and we may be able to render assistance."

Simmons was brave enough; but the dangers he would willingly have faced himself he hesitated before exposing his young mistress to.

"I think we had better go straight on to the Manor," he said, "and then, if you like, after seeing you safely home, I will come back again."

"When it will be too late to do any good, supposing our assistance is required!" exclaimed Edith, scornfully. "No, if we go at all we must go now, this minute."

Simmons allowed himself to be persuaded, being, indeed, anxious, on his own account, to see if anything untoward had happened.

"Of course, Miss Edith; you must do as you like, and I must do as you like," he remarked, resignedly, and then they both entered the Cedars' grounds through a little gate which, curiously enough, was standing wide open.

The plantation, however, in this dim light, presented a perfect labyrinth, which it would have been almost impossible to thread, had not Simmons been aided by his own knowledge of the place. Years ago he had been under-gardener at the Cedars; consequently, he knew his way about the house and grounds.

"What was that?" he exclaimed, suddenly, in a trembling voice, catching hold of his mistress's arm.

It was nothing more or less than a groan, so deep that it seemed to come from a man in mortal agony. It was followed by a series of sharp cries.

"Help!—murder!—help!"

For a moment Edith felt her courage desert her, and was seized with a desire to run away. Then she impetuously hurried Simmons forward in the direction from whence the cries had come, and in another few minutes they stood in a small space under the trees; and the light of Simmons' lantern fell on a strange and awful scene.

Half stretched on the ground lay a man whose face was ghastly white, and the front of whose shirt was stained crimson with blood. His eyes were wild and frenzied, and he was holding, with the grasp of desperation, another man who vainly tried to draw himself away.

"Good heavens!" cried Edith, as her gaze fell on the wounded man. "It is Captain Marchant!"

He heard the words, and his eyes turned to her. It seemed as if he recognized her voice.

"Yes," he said, savagely, "it is I, and I am murdered by your lover, Claud Trevelyan!"

A loud shriek broke from poor Edith's lips at these awful words, and at the same moment Simmons, who was athletic and very powerful, ran forward, and by the exertion of all his strength, pulled away the man whom Marchant was holding down.

"Why, it is Mr. Stuart!" he said, as the light shone on Claud's face, which was as pale as Marchant's own. "What brings you here, sir?"

Claud made no reply. He seemed absolutely bewildered, as much by the presence of Edith as by the startling events of the evening.

The dying man, who, when he was forced to relinquish his hold on Trevelyan, had fallen back exhausted, now half raised himself on his elbow.

"He shot me," he said, distinctly, but with an effort, and then a sudden flow of blood impeded his utterances.

Edith ran to his side, all other considerations forgotten in the extremity of a fellow-creature's peril. She held her handkerchief to his mouth, and it instantly became crimson with blood. His head sank on her arm—his eyes, fixed and filmy, looked up into her face—unseeing, dead!

"Oh!" she cried out in horror, "cannot you do something for him?—fetch a doctor—get help from the house—only do something!"

"It is too late, Miss Edith," Simmons returned, solemnly. "Lay his head down, miss—the captain is dead!"

She needed not to be told the end had come. The dead weight lying on her arm, the awful, sightless eyes, the motionless limbs, all told their own tale but too plainly.

She let Simmons draw her away, and then she stood speechless, looking down at the man to whom a few hours ago she had bidden good-night. Then he had been full of life, gaiety, and high spirits. Now—She shuddered, and covered her eyes with her hands. The spectacle he presented, with his clothes all dabbled in blood, was too awful—it would haunt her for many a long day.

Simmons alone seemed to preserve his composure. After he had placed Marchant's head reverently on the moss he turned to Claud.

"Mr. Stuart," he said, for, of course, he did not know the young man by his proper name, "can you tell us how this gentleman met his death?"

Claud shook his head, and seemed to make an effort to rouse himself from the species of stupor that had fallen upon him.

"I know no more than you do. I was asleep at the Cedars when I heard a pistol shot, and when I came down here I found Captain Marchant lying where he is now in a state of unconsciousness. I bent over him, and was going to administer some brandy,

when he opened his eyes and saw me. I can only imagine that his brain was clouded with the mists of approaching death, for he seized hold of me and would not let me go. It was at that moment you came up."

"You heard what he said, sir?"

"Yes, I heard what he said, and I imagine that he was under the influence of a delusion, as dying men sometimes are."

After this there was a silence. Neither of the trio moved. Then, apparently from the road, there came the sound of voices and merry laughter—in hideous mockery, as it seemed, of the tragedy that had just been enacted.

Edith looked up, and Simmons answered her unspoken question.

"They are the waits, I expect, going home after singing their carols. I will call them."

His suggestion proved correct, and, in answer to the butler's shouts, they arrived on the scene, and were naturally horrified by what they saw.

And, indeed, it was a picture that once looked upon would remain indelibly stamped on the memory.

The flickering light of the lanterns fell on Edith's downcast face and clasped hands, and lent an additional horror to the rigid form lying at her feet. By its side was a long, narrow hole that had every appearance of a grave from which the damp earth had been recently dug out.

Simmons being the eldest, as well as the person of most authority in the little group, took upon himself the office of spokesman.

"This is a terrible thing, sir," he said, addressing Claud, "and it's not for me to say how it came about. But murder's been done, and we must try and see that justice is done too. I come here and see a gentleman, who is a visitor of my master's, lying wounded to death, and he accuses another gentleman, who is also a friend of my master's, of having murdered him. How true it may be I can't tell, and time alone will tell; but my duty is clear. You must come with me to the police station, Mr. Stuart, and I must charge you there with the murder of Captain Fuke Marchant."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ROSALIND'S PERIL.

Despite the confidence Nona had expressed to Claud before his departure, he had no sooner really left the house than she became the prey of nervous fancies, which it required all Rosalind's tact and cheerfulness to assuage.

The first day passed miserably enough. The hours dragged wearily on, and Nona did nothing but ask her companion what o'clock it was, and bemoan her own inability to see the dial-plate.

Both were glad when bedtime came, and at the blind woman's request Rosalind left her own apartment and shared that of Nona.

"I am sorry now that I let Claud go," said the latter, as she got into bed. "I feel like a child lost in the labyrinth of a dark wood when he is not here. I have grown to depend on him so entirely that I seem to have made him part of myself. Ah! he has indeed been a true friend to me! The mere sense of his presence is, in a way, a protection."

"The world would be better if it possessed a few more men like him," rejoined Rosalind, softly.

Then she added, by way of consolation,—

"He will be back early to-morrow—by the first train, he said."

But this prophecy was not destined to be fulfilled; for the next day came—one—two o'clock arrived, but it did not bring Claud with it.

Nona's nervousness increased. She was full of apprehensions of accidents, or other possible dangers that might have befallen him.

"It is so easy to miss a train," Rosalind told her. "A hundred trivial things might have happened to detain him, and the unex-

pected loss of a few seconds would be enough to explain the delay."

"But in that case he would have telegraphed," was the restless answer.

"No; that would be the very last thing he would do under the circumstances. Is it not his object to attract as little attention to this house as possible?"

"True, true. I had forgotten for the moment. My brain is not so clear as yours. But then," Nona continued, in extenuation, "you have not had so much trouble as I have."

Rosalind sighed heavily. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and hers at the present moment was sad enough in all conscience.

But she said nothing; she was the last woman in the world to make a parade of her troubles, and her task now was to keep up Nona's spirits as well as she was able.

"Look at the time-table, and tell me what time the next train gets in to Paddington," said Mrs. Vansittart; and she obeyed, with the result of discovering that Claud could not arrive at the White House earlier than half-past eight.

The up-trains from Crowthorne were few and far between. It was such a small and unimportant village that its railway traffic was hardly worth considering.

The two women had dinner together at six o'clock, but it was not much of a meal for either of them. A cloud hung over both, and in addition to mental anxiety Nona had a bad headache, which forced her a little later to go upstairs, and lie down in bed, in the hope of getting relief from the pain.

Rosalind stayed with her until she fell into a light slumber, then she went down to give Andrea—who was cook as well as general factotum—certain directions about supper for Claud, who she judged would probably be hungry after his long journey.

After that she returned to Nona's sitting-room, where a fire was burning, and throwing ruddy, flickering shadows on the wall and ceiling. She drew an arm-chair close up to the flames and sat down, her back to the window.

The night was very cold; outside a drizzling rain was falling, and the air was raw and nipping. The wind shrilled and moaned round the house with an eerie sound that caused Rosalind to shiver.

She made an effort to throw off this sense of fear and oppression clinging about her.

"Why, I am as bad as poor Nona herself, with her dreams and forebodings!" she exclaimed, half aloud. "Surely there is no cause for fear. Mr. Trevelyan somehow managed to miss the train he intended to catch and will come by the next one. There is nothing in his absence to be alarmed at."

Thus endeavouring to reassure herself, she took up a book and tried to read, but the lamp had not been lighted, and the gleam of the fire was too fitful to enable her to see the type, so she put the book down, and, throwing a shawl of Nona's over her head, in the hope of driving away certain premonitory symptoms of toothache, gave herself up to a quiet reverie.

How long she stayed there she could hardly have told. The warmth of the fire, the undisturbed quiet of the house, combined with her sleeplessness of the night before, took their effect on her; and presently she fell into a sort of half doze, while the fire burned lower and lower, and the room became enveloped in partial darkness.

All in a moment, without preparation or warning, she felt herself seized from behind by a pair of lithe, strong arms, and even while a cry of terror trembled on her lips, a hand was pressed upon them, and a handkerchief saturated in some drug that gave forth a faint, sickly odour, was held close to her nostrils, with the result that, in a few moments, she entirely lost consciousness, and lay cold and quiescent in the arms of her assailant.

All this took less time than it occupies to write it. The intruder had entered through

the French window, the shutters of which had been left unsecured, and he had, through the girl's slumber, been enabled to approach her without her having the least suspicion of his presence.

A fur cloak was lying on the couch, and this the man caught up and wrapped about her, at the same time drawing the woollen shawl closer round her face.

Having accomplished this, and without even a glance at the closed eyes, he stepped back with his burden, and carried her out into the garden through the French window.

After going a little distance he paused and drew breath; for Rosalind, insensible as she was, was no light weight, and the strain upon his arms was pretty severe.

"Phew!" he whistled. "Big women may be all very well to look at, but when it comes to carrying them, give me the puny ones!"

Nevertheless, his pause was only momentary, for the danger of being seen was too great to permit further delay than was actually necessary.

Hardly had he gained the gate leading to the road when a dark figure started out of some bushes, behind which it had been lying concealed.

It was Pierce Vansittart, and a quick exclamation of triumph escaped his lips as he saw the motionless form in the fur cloak.

"You have been quick, Gaston," he murmured below his breath. "Was your task a difficult one?"

"No, sir; not half so difficult as I feared. The lady was asleep, and it did not take five minutes to open the window and get her outside. The worst part of it is she's heavy, sir!"

"Yes," returned Vansittart, grimly. "I suppose she is what people call a fine woman, though, for my part, I think the title a mistake. I suppose she did not see your face?"

"No. I think she'll be rather surprised when she comes to, to find herself in a fresh place, for she hadn't time to know what was happening to her before the chloroform took effect."

"And you were not disturbed at all?"

"Not at all, sir. There didn't seem to be a soul in the house, for it was as still as the grave. It was a good idea of yours, sir—settling the mastiff beforehand."

"Yes; he was a nasty brute, and might have given us trouble. His love of raw beef-steak has proved unfortunate so far as he is concerned! However, that only proves the truth of one of my favourite opinions—that every man, woman, child and animal has his or her weak points; the thing is to find it!"

"Perhaps so, but we are not all of us as clever at that game as you are, Mr. Vansittart."

"Hush!" muttered the gentleman addressed, glancing round apprehensively. "It's just as well not to mention names. One never knows who may be within earshot."

Something in the remark seemed to offend Gaston, for he said, rather irritably,—

"I don't see any reason for such an extra amount of caution. We are not burglars—we have done nothing that the law can lay hold of. If a man hasn't a right to compel his own wife to live with him, I should like to know what he has a right to do!"

"True, quite true," assented Vansittart, soothingly; "only, don't you see, awkward questions might be asked if any one chance to see me taking her away while she was unconscious, and an appearance before a magistrate might follow, which would be decidedly unpleasant. But come! don't let us waste any more time in talking. Seamer has no doubt heard my whistle, and the carriage is waiting for us."

"Seems to me you had better carry the lady into it yourself," observed Gaston, grumpily. For some reason or other he chose to think himself aggrieved. "She's not a feather weight, and I've had about enough of turning myself into a beast of burden."

Vansittart at once acquiesced. It was his

policy to keep on good terms with the agents he chose to do his dirty work, and he would find an opportunity in the future of "squaring accounts" with Mr. Gaston for his sudden outbreak of temper. Accordingly, Rosalind was transferred to the arms of the man who had insulted her by the offer of his love, and who, utterly unaware of her identity, muttered a savage curse between his teeth as he conveyed her to the brougham waiting a little way beyond the house.

He hated his wife with a fierce, stealthy hatred, born of her resistance to his will, and the knowledge that she, of all the world, best knew the utter baseness of his character. She had thwarted him just when victory seemed to touch his lips. She had escaped him just when he thought her chances of shaking herself free were irretrievably gone. But again she was in his clutches, and this time he swore no earthly power should rescue her!

The brougham had no lights—for a very obvious reason—consequently, as he laid his burthen down inside, he had no chance of seeing her face, for the twofold reason of the darkness, and the fact that her head was muffled up in a shawl.

Seamer, the valet, was driving, and he had taken the precaution of getting a carriage with indiarubber tyres to the wheels. Thus it went along silently, and although the White House did not stand far back from the road, neither of its inmates had an idea that a vehicle had approached.

Gaston got up on the box, Vansittart sat in one corner of the carriage, while his supposed wife lay back in the other, as motionless as if she had been dead. He did not look at her—did not even throw a glance in her direction, but lighted a cigar, and began puffing away at it, while his thoughts were busy with the future.

"No chance of Claud Trevelyan turning up at an unexpected moment!" he muttered; then an angry frown crossed his brow. "Fool! Why did he tempt me? And his fate! I had no wish to kill him, although it better suits my purpose that he should be out of the world than in it! The money was mine, and I had a right to defend it. Pahaw! he has only met with his deserts, after all!"

He congratulated himself upon the entire success that had attended his abduction of Nona. Not a hitch anywhere! Luck had been with him in the enterprise, and everything had gone smoothly.

It is true he had taken time by the forelock, and had executed his plans with almost as much rapidity as he had conceived them.

He had come to London by the early morning mail; and, having taken the gold and jewels he brought with him to his chambers, had determined to secure his wife's person before the news of Claud's misadventure had time to reach her.

Whether Claud was dead or not he did not know, for, after firing the pistol, his one idea had been to get away with the treasure as quickly as possible, and he had not spared one glance for the wounded man lying groaning at his feet.

When he had time to reflect, he saw that there was danger for him so long as Nona remained at large.

Her quick imagination, stimulated, perhaps, by superstition, would at once fix on him as Claud's assailant, and the thief of the buried box.

She might even accuse him openly of the crime, and the charge would be one he would find it difficult to rebut. His obvious plan was, therefore, to lose no time in securing her, and this was rendered all the more easy because he knew the place of her abode.

To a man of his character there is no difficulty in getting tools so long as there is money with which to pay them, and this Vansittart now possessed in abundance.

Seamer, his valet, was devoted to him body and soul, and it was he who had undertaken to get rid of the mastiff, Nero, by means of poisoned meat. He, too, had suggested Gas-



ton as a likely person to aid; and, as Vansittart wished, in view of the possible failure of his plans, to run no risk of being seen, Gaston had been selected to enter Nona's sitting-room, and drug its mistress by means of the chloroform.

How the scheme succeeded we have already seen.

The carriage rolled silently on for some miles; then Vansittart, sick to death of the monotony of riding alone with that still figure and his own thoughts, sprang out, and threw away his cigar, while Seamer drew up to await his orders.

"We are beyond all reach of pursuit now," he said, "and the rest is plain sailing; so you, Seamer, can manage without my aid. Drive straight on till you come to the Lodge, then give Mrs. Vansittart into Mrs. Blackmore's charge, and tell her I will be at the Lodge first thing to-morrow morning. We are not far from London now, and I can easily contrive to pick up a cab, and drive to my club. I may trust your prudence, Seamer?"

"I think so, sir," responded the valet, and Vansittart, with a little nod, walked off, and soon found himself in a hansom, driving through the gaudy streets of London.

On arriving at his club his first demand was for an evening paper. One was brought, and he sat down in a corner to read it, turning the sheets over with some slight nervousness until his eyes fell on the word "Crowthorne," and he knew he had found the paragraph he wanted.

The heading was in large capitals, as befitted such a startling announcement.

"Terrible Murder of an Officer at Crowthorne!"

"Apprehension of the Supposed Murderer!"

Vansittart put the paper down, and sat for a minute staring into vacancy, while great drops of perspiration stood on his brow.

"Murder of an officer!" What did it mean? Claud Trevelyan was not an officer! and how was it possible that his murderer had been apprehended?

Then he took the paper up again in a perfect frenzy of excitement, and read the paragraph straight through from beginning to end.

"It is our painful duty to chronicle a terrible and mysterious crime, of which an old house in W—shire, called the Cedars, has been the scene. The victim is an officer of Her Majesty's army, named Fulke Marchant, and he was discovered a little after midnight shot through the lungs, and lying in a little plantation at the back of the house.

"At that time he was not quite dead, but had sufficient strength left to denounce, as his murderer, a young man with whom he was even then struggling, and who appears to have been a former tenant of the Cedars, concerning whom several strange reports have been bruited abroad.

"This young man calls himself Claud Stuart, but it seems doubtful whether this is his true name. He was at once apprehended, and will be brought before the magistrates to-morrow morning, when, no doubt, many strange details will come out in evidence.

"A singular circumstance in this tragedy is that, close beside the murdered man was dug a long, deep hole, which one may suppose was intended by the murderer as a burial place for his victim. It had evidently been freshly dug, and the shovel and pickaxe were both lying close beside it, together with a wooden box, which, however, was quite empty.

"Oddly enough, the first person to discover the crime was a young lady of position in the neighbourhood, to whom both Captain Marchant and Mr. Stuart seem to have been paying their addresses, and who, with a man-servant, was on her way home from visiting a sick girl in the next village.

"This circumstance adds to the romantic nature of the crime, whose motive, so far as can be at present ascertained, seems to have been jealousy. But all suppositions on the

subject are premature, as the accused man, except for protesting his innocence, has maintained a complete silence, and has also refused to communicate with his friends. That further and startling developments are to be expected we can hardly doubt, and the public will look forward to them with intense interest."

This was indeed a most unexpected *dénouement*; and at first, as he read it, Vansittart could hardly believe the evidence of his own senses. It was Marchant—Fulke Marchant, his old friend—whom he had shot, and not Claud Trevelyan!

But what brought Marchant at the Cedars at such an hour? How did he know of the treasure that lay buried in the plantation?

This was a puzzle to Vansittart, but it will not be one to the reader, who is aware of Marchant having played the spy when the iron box was consigned to its hiding place, and who will readily guess that the knowledge of what it contained (given him by Vansittart himself at their last interview) had proved too much for the officer's scruples.

Now Vansittart understood what had perplexed him so much while he was waiting in the Cedars garden for Claud to come out. He had then felt quite convinced that no one had left the house.

Of course Marchant had come in through the back gate leading into the lane, and, therefore, the first intimation of his presence the watcher received was after he had commenced digging.

It was all very strange and mysterious, but Vansittart was a practical man, and not given to troubling his brain with problems of which the solution seemed difficult. What he had to think of was the events that had really happened, and the way in which they were likely to affect him.

Reviewing the situation with the heartless calm that was part of his nature, he saw that the circumstantial evidence was strongly against Claud, while there was really nothing to connect him with the murder.

No one knew of his intention to visit the Cedars—no one had even been aware that he had left London. Practically he was safe, and unless Claud could prove an alibi, he stood a very fair chance of paying the penalty of a crime of which he was innocent.

"It is fate!" muttered Vansittart, philosophically. "Luck has been with me, and against him. Well, the world is a see-saw, when the one is up the other is down!"

But he was doubly glad that he had made sure of Nona, who had now lost her only protector, and who was absolutely and completely in his power. He decided to see her without delay the next morning, and to keep from her all knowledge of what had befallen Claud.

This, owing to her affliction, would be easy enough, as she would be surrounded by his own minions, and would have no chance of communication with the outer world. What he should do with her—whether he should take her abroad, or let her remain in England—he had not yet decided. Probably he would adopt the former plan, as being the less risky.

Anyhow, he had full possession of a great part of her money, and this was a most important factor in his plans—indeed, so triumphant was he, that after a little while the shock of Marchant's death passed completely away from him, and the only requiem he gave the man with whom his own life had been intimately bound up was a half pitiful, half contemptuous,—

"Poor devil! He had nearly run to the end of his tether, and he's as well out of the world as in it!"

Such is the friendship of wicked men!

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHAT THE NEWSPAPER TOLD NONA.

NONA VANSITTART got out of bed as the clock on her mantelpiece struck the half-hour past eight, and proceeded to dress herself with the

deft, clever fingers that seem to be the special gift of the blind.

Her headache was better, the pain had gone, and all that remained was a dull throbbing, which nothing but a good night's rest would relieve.

Half past eight was the time Rosalind had calculated Claud would return, and as Nona went downstairs, guiding herself by the banisters, she half expected to hear his voice in the passage below.

But the house was very still—not a sound was audible, and Nona felt a curious thrill—half excitement, half dread,—when she reached her own sitting-room, and was greeted there with the same ominous silence.

"Rosalind!" she cried; but there was no answer; and while she stood listening, a cold breath of air blew in from the open window—which of course had not been closed since Gaston's departure with Rosalind.

"She has stepped outside to listen for Claud," murmured the blind woman; but with some uneasiness, for she reflected that, after all, it was not a very likely thing for her companion to do, especially as the night was cold and uninviting.

At that moment, while she was hesitating, there came the sound of hasty footsteps in the passage, and Andrea rushed in, wringing his hands.

"Ah, Madame—madame—such a misfortune—so terrible a loss!" he exclaimed, in his slightly accented English. "Nero is dead—poisoned! He is lying outside his kennel, stiff and cold, and I knew nothing of it till a moment ago. There is a plot—a conspiracy—and my master is not here to advise us!"

Nona sank tremblingly down on a seat, thoroughly upset by the news. She asked Andrea to give her further details; but, as a matter of fact, the man had told all there was to tell, and had nothing more to add.

He was a faithful and devoted servant, but he had no courage either morally or physically, otherwise he would have kept the story of Nero's poisoning to himself, for fear of alarming his young mistress.

"Where is Miss Grant?" continued Nona, after a pause, and Andrea seemed astonished at the question.

"Miss Grant? I thought she was with you? I have not seen her since dinner-time."

"I think, perhaps, she has gone into the garden, the window is open, Go and see," commanded Nona, rapidly; and as the man obeyed she wrung her hands with a frantic gesture of helplessness. It was at such moments as these that her blindness pressed most heavily upon her.

Andrea searched the garden, called Rosalind's name, then came back into the house, carefully barred the window, and looked into every room to make sure she was not there.

At the end of his search he came back to his mistress with the news that her companion was nowhere to be found; and by this time it was considerably after nine o'clock—nearly an hour later than Claud had been expected to arrive.

"Rosalind gone—Claud not here! What can possibly be the meaning of it?" cried Nona, and the question was one to which Andrea could not supply an answer.

That something untoward had happened both he and his mistress believed, and the fact of the mastiff being poisoned pointed to a premeditated plot, whose nature it seemed impossible to guess.

Nona was driven nearly frantic with anxiety. Andrea was hardly less agitated. The worst part of the business was that they could do nothing but wait for events to develop themselves. Of the two, the man was certainly the more helpless, and his loudly-expressed fears tended to heighten his mistress's distress. At last she sent him downstairs. She wanted to be alone—free to think of what had taken place without interruption.

Was it possible Claud had been waylaid and robbed? On his return journey he would have a large sum of money, and a quantity of valu-

ables on his person, and it was within the range of probability that this had become known.

Pursuing this train of ideas, Nona thought of the newspaper, which was sent morning and evening by post from London.

She rang the bell, and told Andrea to look carefully through the columns of the *Globe*, and see if he could find any mention of his master, or of anyone to whom an accident had happened.

The man obeyed, and ere long his eye was caught by the self-same account of the murder as had first attracted Vancettart's attention. He read it aloud, and poor Nona's horror and dismay may be imagined—better than described. For a few minutes she was incapable of thought or decision, then she gathered up all her energies, and reviewed the situation as calmly as she could.

Whether Cland had killed Marchant or not was uncertain, but if he had Nona knew it must have been by accident, and thus the young man was morally innocent in fact, if not in deed. At any rate, her place was at his side. She could not desert him in such an emergency after all his kindness to her.

She understood why he refused "to communicate with his friends." His first thought was still of her, and he would not run any risk of revealing her whereabouts to her husband.

That he should be left to fight his battle unaided and friendless was not for a moment to be thought of. At least, she could prove his motive for going down to Crowthorne, and could dispel the horrible suggestion to which the newly-made hole had quite naturally given rise.

She hastily communicated her plans to Andrea. He must take her straight to Crowthorne, and she would, if possible, get there in time to attend as witness before the magistrates, when Cland's examination came on.

No matter whether her name appeared in the papers or not—no matter what publicity might be given to her miserable story—her duty was clear. At all hazards she must do all she could to prove Cland's innocence, and when that was once established it would be time enough to think of herself.

Andrea acquiesced in her arrangements, as was his usual custom, and in the excitement consequent on Cland's peril Rosalind's disappearance was little thought of. Of course it was strange; but Nona knew nothing of the young girl's history, although, from hints and certain expressions which Cland had dropped, she guessed that the companion had a history, and she was therefore utterly in the dark as to what friends or enemies Rosalind might have.

After a miserably anxious night, day dawned, and in the dim mirk of the December morning the blind woman and her servant set out for Crowthorne. On their journey they several times heard the murder discussed by their travelling companions, and the opinion that Cland was guilty seemed to be universal.

Once—much to the speaker's surprise—Nona passionately contradicted his assertion that the young man had killed Marchant in cold blood; and Andrea, who knew her nervous, excitable temperament, feared for the consequences when once the reaction had set in. At present she was sustained by the hope of helping the man who had risked so much to help her, and her thoughts went no further than the examination at which she was determined, if possible, to give evidence.

Her one fear was that she would not be in time. She had caught the earliest train that left Paddington for Crowthorne, and yet she could not arrive there until one o'clock, for the train was a slow one, and there were one or two changes to make en route.

Naturally enough, she was in a fever of impatience that Andrea found it a difficult matter to control, and he was as thankful as she was when, at length, they were deposited at the little village station.

There, a solitary cab was in waiting—a stroke of good luck on which they could hardly have calculated.

As a matter of fact, it had just brought a passenger to catch the up-train, and had lingered on in the forlorn hope of picking up a fare from the down.

The driver was in earnest conversation with one or two idlers who had gathered into a knot to discuss the thrilling event which had just taken place, and which would form the staple local gossip for the next six months.

It was with some reluctance that he detached himself from the group, but when he received instructions from Nona to drive "to the place where Mr. Stuart's examination would take place," he pricked up his ears, and his demeanour changed as if by magic.

Here were people actually connected with the murderer, perhaps, and it was his happy privilege to drive them to their destination!

"The examination was to be before Squire Charlton; and it would be held in the Justice-room at Crowthorne Manor," he told them; then he jumped on the box, and, in obedience to Nona's instructions, drove as quickly as he could until they reached the Manor.

On their way they were met by several villagers, who had given up their day's work as a tribute to the local excitement, and all of whom gazed curiously at the closely-veiled woman sitting in the cab, and the dark foreigner at her side.

Nona—poor thing!—was spared the knowledge of their rude staring, and kept reiterating her request to "drive faster—faster!"

At length Crowthorne Manor was reached, and Nona and her companion were set down in front of the principal entrance—a mistake on the part of the driver, as the Justice-room was at the back of the house.

A man-servant was standing on the steps, paring his nails and looking idly important, and to him Andrea addressed his request, which he received with a stare of rude curiosity.

"You want to see the Squire, do you—about Mr. Stuart's case? Well, you may spare yourself the trouble. The Squire has no time to attend to everybody that wants to get news out of him; and as for Mr. Cland Stuart—he's safely lodged in gaol by this time, for the inquiry's over, and he is committed for the wilful murder of Captain Marchant!"

The man said this with insolent distinctness. He had not been at the Manor long, and was filled with a sense of his own importance and the comparative insignificance of other people.

Nona heard the words, and the shock they gave her was accentuated by the strained state of her nerves. Up to now she had been buoyed up with the hope of seeing Cland—or rather hearing his voice—and pleading his cause.

Now a sense of helplessness—of hopelessness—came over her. She gave a long, quivering sigh, threw out her hands with a gesture of forlorn despair, and then fell forward, in a dead faint.

(To be continued.)

FIRST AND SECOND FIDDLERS.—In the grand orchestra of life everybody is anxious to play first fiddle. Nay, almost everybody *does* play it; for although the first fiddle *absolute* may take precedence of all the rest, yet every second fiddle is first fiddle to somebody. As

Fleas have smaller fleas to bite 'em,  
And so on ad infinitum,

so every man who tickles a superior has an inferior to tickle him. If it were not for this pleasant arrangement we should have no social harmony, and it is only when this system of relations is disturbed that we experience disorders and crashes.

## FALLEN ASLEEP.

FREE from pain for evermore,  
Lies our darling now;  
'Tis in vain we make appeal,  
Death has placed his icy seal  
On the pallid brow.

Lay aside the childish toys,  
And the clothes he wore;  
Quiet are the little feet,  
Hushed the accents once so sweet,  
He has "gone before."

Silence, like a gloomy pall,  
Hangs about our home;  
We are thinking, day and night,  
Of the baby face so bright,  
That will never come.

Though we hope to join our boy  
In the coming years,  
Often to his grave we go,  
Where the tender blossoms grow,  
Moistened by our tears.

Rest, beloved, guarded well,  
By the Saviour's hand,  
Till in happiness we meet,  
At the blessed mercy seat,  
In the "summer land."

M. A. E.

## MY LADY OF THE LAKE.

### CHAPTER LIV.

"HE PARTED ME FROM MY DARLING! IT NOW RESTS WITH YOU TO BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN. WILL YOU—WILL YOU, MOTHER?"

WHEN Guy Forrester left the club he returned to the hotel where he had taken up his quarters, and lighting his cigar he seated himself in the most comfortable easy chair the room could produce, and gave himself up to deep thought.

He was a bold player in the game of life, and he determined now to make the most impudent stroke of all. He planned to go straight down to Lake St. Ormo and to make a friend of Lady Dalkeith; but this he did not finally decide upon until he had ascertained that Lord Rangor had left England to travel and would not be home for some months, unless something unforeseen should happen.

This was a great relief to the artist, who saw in the Earl a bar to his safe movements; but, as it was, the course was clear for him to "go in and win" if he could, and he meant to have a good try at it.

Lady Dalkeith once his friend he did not expect to experience the faintest difficulty in once more winning May. He believed that a few affectionate words would soon revive her love, and that her sense of duty would cause her to consent to becoming his wife in something more than name.

In fact he felt sure that if he could gain Lady Dalkeith to his side he should have no trouble with May; and the tales he had listened to at the club of Sir Roger's accumulated and hoarded wealth, all of which had been inherited by her ladyship, made him eager to gain a place in her esteem and good opinion.

His only regret was that he was prevented by his marriage with May from courting her mother, who would have proved a far better "spec," since she had unquestioned and unquestionable control over the Baronet's enormous fortune, which he felt he should have had the greatest satisfaction in spending for her right royally.

Guy Forrester flattered himself that he should be no niggard were he in such a situation, and greatly admired the picture of his own generosity, such as it would be had he



the means to gratify it; but since the widow was out of his reach, in consequence of circumstances which he could not control, he felt that he was doing really a kind and charitable act in making his poor little wife happy.

He felt quite satisfied and genial concerning her. She was a jolly little girl, and how she had loved him! With plenty of money, why they should be as happy as a pair of turtle doves! Her beauty and style were not to be denied, and he looked down a vista of uncommonly prosperous years.

He had heard that May could not be found, but that did not trouble him at all. Of course she would turn up all right, and he was glad to have Lady Dalkeith to himself at first, to gain an influence over her without any adverse story being told her.

He knew that at present May was angry with him. He had not forgotten the flash of scorn in her beautiful blue eyes, nor the proud pose of her graceful neck as she left him at the hotel at Great St. Orme that summer morning, when she had sought him there with her full young heart, ready to follow him to the end of the world, because she had loved him and believed in him, and because she was his wife.

She might have said something to her mother had they met before he had made his peace with her, and before he had brought the elder woman under the power of his fascinations.

He went to bed in good time that night, so as to be fresh and look his best, for an early start.

He was well aware of the value of first impressions, and the following morning he consulted his mirror even more than usual, and that is saying a good deal. Moreover, he was quite satisfied with the result!

He had not hit it off with Sir Roger, he was obliged to confess that, but it was the only failure he could remember, when he had really set himself to please. But then, Sir Roger was an altogether unusual, out-of-the-way man. A being of adamant, studded with prickles and sharp quills.

There could not be two such hard nuts to crack in all the world! And, besides, his influence over women was an acknowledged fact. How often had he been rallied and congratulated upon it by his own sex as a thing in him to be greatly envied.

It was not often that Guy Forrester was excited by outside circumstances, but he did not at the present moment quite see his way.

His allowance had come to an end, his picture, from which he expected great things, was lost to him for ever, and both in London and Paris, his two fields of labour, he was in debt.

There was but one chance which he saw open to him, to make a friend of Lady Dalkeith, and, through his position as her son-in-law, get at both her heart and her banking account.

With this hope, this end in view, the artist, having made his careful toilet, partook of a *recherche* breakfast, and drove off in a hansom to the station.

Of course he travelled first-class! When did Guy Forrester ever deny himself either pleasure, comfort, or luxury?

He went to the hotel where he had stayed when at St. Orme, and was warmly welcomed by the landlady, barmaid, etc.

The picturesque artist ever was a favourite with the womenkind, there was no denying it.

He left his little black leather bag at the hotel, and ordered a dog-cart to take him over to St. Orme Cottage.

He had no mind to arrive dusty and travel-stained before the lady he desired to please; that, he told himself, would be poor economy, first impressions being most important.

It was a beautiful morning, and he thoroughly enjoyed his drive. The dog-cart ran easily, the horse was a good stepper and he liked handling the ribbons. So he was in one of his very best moods.

Moreover, he was not haunted by the way, as some men might have been, by the remembrance of the woman who had so loved and

trusted him, whom he had treated with such lack of kindness and want of heart.

There never had been a time when Guy Forrester had not been satisfied with himself and his actions.

He could not have hit upon a better day or time for his purpose. Lady Dalkeith was feeling especially lonely that afternoon.

She had received a letter from her solicitors, saying that no trace of May could be found, and it had greatly saddened her.

She had also heard from Frank Masculine that his uncle was ill, having fairly overworked himself in mind and body, and the news troubled her.

Celestine had likewise received a letter, and had gone to bed with a nervous headache soon after she had read it, but not a word of its contents passed her lips, for it teemed with the writer's longing to have her in his daily life, and less than ever did Celestine feel that she could desert Lady Dalkeith, even though she now knew how dear Frank had become to her, and longed as much as he could do, for their re-union.

Thus it came to pass that Lady Dalkeith was alone when Guy's dog-cart dashed up to the pretty porch door, but she was too preoccupied to notice the unusual stir upon the gravel outside.

She was sitting with her eyes and mind intently fixed upon the picture of "My Lady of the Lake," which covered the chief part of one wall of her pretty, cosy dining room, and her heart was in truth *aching* to see her child in the flesh, and filled with fears for her.

The quiet, well-trained parlourmaid opened the door of the room to announce Mr. Forrester, but at a sign from the artist she was silenced.

Lady Dalkeith's back was towards them, her face uplifted to the canvas, and she was talking to the sweet, inanimate picture, which seemed to look back at her as a thing of life.

"Oh, May! May! when shall I find you, my darling? and what is the secret of your life, that sorrow which your poor father spoke of, but had no time to explain? Oh, if I only knew—if I only knew! I must find the man who painted this. I am mistaken if he does not hold the key to this mystery, and yet I feel I cannot couple my poor child's name with his to the world. I cannot tell the detectives my sad thoughts. A young girl's reputation is like the down upon the wing of a butterfly, it is so quickly injured and defaced. But if I could but find Mr. Forrester myself—"

The door closed, and this time it attracted her attention.

She started, fearing her words might have been overheard, as in truth they had been, and turned abruptly, to find herself face to face with a stranger.

The artist was looking his very best, and he bowed low before the Baronet's widow, not with the gallant and *débonnaire* air which was natural to him, but with a depth and earnestness in his handsome face altogether foreign to his nature.

"Lady Dalkeith," he said, with a low, grave intonation, "I am here, and both ready and willing to answer any questions which you may see fit to put to me. Believe me, I have suffered as well as yourself, and am most anxious to assist you as far as it lies in my poor power."

"You know the story of the bundle of sticks, every one does, but then people do not put the theory into practice, and one stick left alone has not much power to cope with adversity. I have tried standing alone, and I have found it sad enough!"

"Let me, dear Lady Dalkeith, join my forces to yours; let me tell you all my story, and hear yours. We have both been in sorrow and are so still, from one and the same cause. Is there any reason why we should not help and comfort each other? Let us assist one another to find May. Truly you cannot desire to do so more than I do."

"Yes, Lady Dalkeith, I am the artist you

wished to find. I am Guy Forrester, who became your daughter's friend upon the bosom of your calm lake where we passed so many blissful hours hand in hand, till trouble came to us and shattered all our fairy visions and our Spanish castles."

"Young love is a beautiful and tender plant, Lady Dalkeith, and it cannot bear the blasts of anger and disapprobation without being seared and blighted, and the tender shoots of beauty killed; but even that does not affect the root. That remains alive, and will throw up fresh beauty if only the sun will shine upon it with its genial warmth. Will you be that sun to May and me, dear Lady Dalkeith?"

"The anger of Sir Roger that his daughter should have chosen so humble a mate was very keen, and—how shall I tell you?—he parted me from my darling! It now rests with you to bring us together again. Will you—will you—Mother!"

The dark eyes looked deep into her own, he held out both his hands and clasped hers firmly. His voice absolutely trembled with eagerness and excitement. He had thrown all his soul into his words, as a successful actor does into his part, and he carried her with him.

The firm lips quivered, the blue eyes softened.

"Mother!" she echoed. "Mr. Forrester what do you mean? If you know where my daughter is, for the love of Heaven speak. I would give all I possess to find her!"

"Yes, mother, I am sure you would. You cannot think how May loved you, my darling May, nor all our plans to find you. I call you so dear, because your little May is my wife, even though her father's verdict parted us. Dear Lady Dalkeith it is for you to forgive us and to make us happy again, and, what is more, you are too good a woman not to do so!"

## CHAPTER LV.

"YOU HAVE WRONGED ME," GUY RETIRED QUITE SORROWFULLY.

THE hot blood surged over Lady Dalkeith's face. It was evident that she was deeply affected by the artist's words; but it receded, and left her very pale.

The surprise over, she gently withdrew her hands from Guy's, and he answered her act reproachfully.

"Do you shrink from your son-in-law, who would gladly be a son indeed to you, if only you will let him?"

"No, I do not shrink from you exactly," she returned gravely, as though she were trying to analyse her feelings. "But, you see, we are quite strangers, even though May may have taken your name, as you assert."

"Do you doubt it? We were married at St. Clement's Church, at Southmore," he answered, seriously. "You can easily get the certificate of our union, if you desire it."

"At St. Clement's Church!" she answered, dreamily, her great blue eyes becoming reflective as she spoke. "Surely I have heard the name before."

"Perhaps Sir Roger mentioned it?"

"No. I remember every word he said. They were his last, and they are fixed indelibly upon my mental retina. But the last few weeks seem to have thrown a mist over other things."

"Sit down, Mr. Forrester, and let me hear all you have to tell me about my little May. The old memory, whatever it is, will come back to me when I am not looking for it. Poor May! she was too young to encounter sorrow—too young to become a wife."

"How is that?" he queried, softly. "She was not too young to love me with all her heart and soul!"

"Perhaps you are right," she returned, a faint smile curling up the corners of her expressive mouth. "But still, had I been here I should have bidden her to wait."

"And I am sure she would not have dis-

obeyed you. But, you see, May would then have had your love to lean on. As it was, she had no one but me. You cannot think what a desolate, sad-eyed young creature she was when I came across her, singing to the birds and the flowers for lack of better companionship. No wonder she grew to look for my presence as for sunshine."

"Did she do so? Poor child!" And then, after a pause, she added, "But where was her father?"

"Ah! Doubtless he loved her in his own way. You knew him better than I did, Lady Dalkeith, and it would be heartless and ungentlemanly in me to attempt to make you think harshly of a dead man. But without lack of kindness or generous feeling, I think I may say that my wife's father was too much lost in his ponderous books and deep reading to be any companion to a bright, young girl; and when we met—May and I—like meets like, and we collided as globules of quicksilver."

"How was it you came down here?" asked Lady Dalkeith, gravely, with a flash of memory as to Lord Rangor's words upon the subject; and Guy Forrester was far too clever to attempt to deceive her, thinking it more than possible that his lordship had already enlightened her upon the subject.

"Well," he said, frankly, "I will tell the truth, although I fear it will scarcely raise me in your estimation. The fact is, a man I know was telling me about your daughter's great beauty, of which he had heard a rumour, and advised me to go down to Lake St. Ormo to get a sight of her fair face for my canvas, and laughingly offered me a letter of introduction to her father. That he never meant it I have often thought since; but the idea took possession of my mind, and I kept him to his word."

"Who was the man, Mr. Forrester?"

"I scarcely think it would be fair to tell. Your anger might extend to him—who can say?"

"Who, indeed? I am not especially amiable, I confess. But Lord Rangor has made his peace upon that score."

This was exactly what Guy Forrester had anticipated; but he managed a look of surprise, nevertheless, and did it quite naturally—so naturally as to utterly deceive her ladyship.

"I like you for not trying to throw the blame on others," she continued. "But go on, Mr. Forrester."

"When will you call me Guy?" he inquired, softly. "I used to love my name as May whispered it, although before I had thought it one of the worst which could be bestowed upon a fellow."

"That may come some day, if May desires it; but it is altogether too soon yet."

"For you, no doubt. I can understand your feelings. I am, as you say, a stranger to you; but you have been my mother ever since I gained May's love. We used to sit in the old punt on the lake, and my darling used to lean back upon the cushions—just so"—and he raised his eyes to the picture. "And she looked so lovely that how could I do aught else but love her? We used to talk of you every day. May did so long for you—for a sight of her mother's face, of which she had so dim a memory that it was a trouble to her. So I got Lord Rangor to lend me a photo he had of you, and to give me a description of you. I would not have told you, only it seems you are in his confidence."

"We are very old friends."

"So he informed me; and I am sure he is a staunch one."

"I am certain he is."

"I tried to see him when I arrived in town yesterday, that I might learn something about you."

"He is on the Continent," replied her ladyship. "In fact, I more than suspect he is looking for you; for he knows that I wanted you found."

"Then we have just missed one another, for

I have only crossed the Channel a couple of days. Perhaps some subtle instinct told me that you wanted me, Lady Dalkeith; for although I knew nothing of you or your movements, I felt I must come to England to look for May the moment I heard that Sir Roger was dead. But I certainly never dreamed that you had need of me, for when I last saw May's father he told me that you were not alive. Why he should have deceived me I cannot imagine."

Lady Dalkeith's eyes rested searchingly upon Guy's face.

But he was one of those very few people who have perfect command of their features, and who can appear innocent when most guilty.

There was no sign of consciousness in him whatever, not the faintest. Not a muscle moved to show that he felt, or was aware of, her scrutiny.

"Perhaps he did not then know? He had been himself deceived by the report of my death; and I will be open with you, Mr. Forrester, I was under the impression that you had sent him that false report to get him away from Lake St. Ormo, while you paid your addresses to his daughter. If I have wronged you, I ask your pardon; but the idea has been deeply rooted in my mind."

"You have wronged me!" he replied, quite sorrowfully. "But never mind. Doubtless there are people who claim the name of men who would not so base a part, and how could you tell what I might do? Of course you know nothing whatever of me. But May loved me, and that must be my passport to your good opinion, and may, I hope, to your affection also."

Lady Dalkeith was touched by his words.

"You have a generous nature, I hope and believe," she answered, with feeling. "Help me to find May, and you will not have to complain that I am ungrateful."

"You will receive me as your son?" he asked softly.

"If May wishes it, and says it will be for her happiness."

(To be continued.)

## THE VOICE OF THE TEMPTER.

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### CHAPTER XXXIV.

CYRIL FARQUHAR reached the "Rose and Crown" soon after midnight, and was shown immediately into a room opening out of the coffee-room, which had been hastily fitted up as a bedroom.

Dr. Whitehead was already there. He looked up as Cyril came in, and raised his hand warningly, to prevent him from making any noise.

Sir Eric was lying on the bed, stretched out full length, with his head bound up in many bandages. His face looked ashen grey, and his long eyelashes and strongly-marked eyebrows looked almost black from force of contrast.

Cyril was terribly shocked at his cousin's appearance. Walking up to the bed on tip-toe, he asked the doctor in a whisper what he thought of him.

Dr. Whitehead shook his head gravely. "Can't tell until he rouses from this stupor. At present he is stunned. The worst is he has broken his leg, and I can't set it in his present condition. My assistant is waiting in another room; but I think I may as well send him back."

"Is there any chance of our being able to move him?"

"Not till the leg is set, or we shall make it into a compound fracture at once. After that we might possibly manage it on a mattress."

"Perhaps I had better send George back for the brake?" doubtfully. "He might set his heart on getting home."

"He shall not stir until that leg is set!"

said the little doctor, firmly, feeling that he was lord and master of the tall, powerfully-built Baronet who had just become his patient.

It was the first time in his life that he felt he could rule Sir Eric, and he did not intend to let the opportunity slip.

All his instinctive animosity to the man as a man had disappeared as soon as his professional interest was awakened, and he stipulated that the brake should not be ordered till ten o'clock in the morning.

Mrs. Seddon came quietly into the room, and, after a few words with the doctor, established herself on a chair by the bedside, and proceeded to soak the bandages with a lotion that was already poured out into a basin.

Many a time her master had roused her shame and indignation by his strange conduct; but there is a fund of tenderness in the breast of every true woman which is touched by the sight of suffering; and the housekeeper forgot all faults and failings as she looked at the white face resting so helplessly on the pillow.

"Do lie down and rest, Mr. Cyril," she said in a low voice. "You do look quite tired out."

"I can't rest!" he answered, with an impatient sigh. "Can I be of any use, doctor? If not, I'll go into the garden and get some air!"

"Go and have a smoke, it will quiet your nerves," looking up into the good-looking face with searching eyes. "You look as if a good deal had been taken out of you!"

Cyril turned hastily away, as if afraid of the kindly scrutiny.

"You've got something on your mind to-night," the doctor thought to himself, "which has nothing to do with this job."

The doctor was right. Cyril could not forget the terrible predicament from which he had just been able to save Brenda.

As he paced up and down the straight gravel path outside the window of the room where his cousin was lying, he reflected that if it had not been for George's fidelity to his promise she would have been still under the roof of "The Miller's Rest," with Desborough for her only companion.

Of course, the scoundrel would have worked on her maidenly feelings, and told her that scandalous tongues would make free with her name; and the poor child, with no one to help her—no one to advise—reduced to a perfect agony of shame—might have promised to marry him before she had time to reflect on the consequences.

There was no name too bad for Desborough, and his blood boiled in his veins as he thought of him; but, at least, he had as an excuse that he was madly in love, and only took to foul means because he saw he had no chance with fair. Whilst there was no excuse at all for the man, who, standing in the responsible position of a guardian, betrayed his ward, and gave her into the hands of another man as unprincipled as himself.

What Eric's object was it was impossible to guess, but he had sinned past all forgiveness; and Cyril had come to The Towers with the full intention of telling him that he had forfeited his right to his guardianship, and that he meant to write to Lady Sophia, and lay the facts before her. Now this accident had come and balked him.

If he wrote to Brenda's mother it would be abusing Eric behind his back, and would certainly strike his cousin as the action of a sneak. Delay was dangerous, but Brenda's eyes were opened to her so-called guardian's reckless disregard of duty, and she would be on her guard for the future.

Her affairs might wait for a day or two, but Desborough was on his mind—Desborough whom he had thwarted and baffled, and who was not likely to take his defeat like a reasonable man. He was an impetuous, hot-headed fellow, not likely to deny himself the pleasure of revenge because there would be some danger in taking it.

Cyril felt that night as if he did not very



much care whether his own life were shortened or not, but it troubled his faithful heart to think of what would become of Brenda when he was no longer there to look after her. His hands were tied at the present moment with regard to Lady Sophia, but surely he might think of somebody else who would be willing to watch over her to a certain extent.

Miss Moreland was willing, but utterly powerless. Lady Mandeville had the power if she chose to exert it, and he decided that she must be made to see that her own dignity as well as her own self-respect depended on the way she took care of the girl who had been committed to her charge.

"Sir Eric is awake, and would like to see you, sir," said Whistler, from the open doorway.

"I'll come at once," and he hurried into the house.

"Look here, Cyril," said the Baronet, hoarsely, as soon as his cousin stood by his bedside, "you must get me out of this. I want to get home at once."

Strange to say he always forgot that Cyril had been injured by him when he wanted to get something out of him. And it showed what a high opinion he had of his character that he never expected him to refuse.

Cyril told him that he had already sent for the brake, but his leg must be set before he could be moved.

"Bother my leg!" he said, fiercely, though his voice was so weak that he could not raise it. "That can be done just as well at The Towers."

"Excuse me, Sir Eric," said the doctor, quietly. "You cannot move an inch till your leg is set."

Sir Eric expostulated, but he had to give in.

"You see," he said in an undertone, whilst the doctor was arranging matters with his assistant, "I want to get home—and ask her what she meant by it. Odd thing, wasn't it, to leave me if she cared one straw about me?"

"I told her so; but you wouldn't be able to speak to her for hours, even if you were there. You don't suppose she is sitting up for you, do you?"

"I suppose not," with an impatient sigh, as he drew his brows together. "Look here," after a pause, "just tell me if you've heard anything of Brenda."

Cyril's face hardened, as he bent forward so that his cousin might be sure to hear every word he said.

"I know the fiendish plot you laid for her; but, thank Heaven, I was able to save her. She is safe at The Towers now," his voice trembling with passion.

"Jove! I'm awfully glad to hear it. If Mrs. Wyndham chuckles me over, it will be something to have Bren to fall back upon!"

Cyril turned away in utter disgust. Could this man be a Farquhar—of the same blood as himself? It seemed impossible. His sense of honour seemed to have perished through a process of slow degeneration, and he had lost all sense of shame. All was swallowed up in a loathsome selfishness to which nothing was sacred.

Dr. Whitehead came forward and said he was ready. Cyril and Whistler stood by to give their services if they were needed, and were soon called to help.

Sir Eric never flinched as the four men tugged at his leg, but he was deadly white, and the perspiration was standing in large drops upon his forehead before it was over.

The leg when set was encased in plaster of Paris, so that no ordinarily incautious movement could cause the bone to slip out of its place.

"We must let him rest a bit," said the doctor, wiping his forehead. "He's a plucky fellow," lowering his voice to a whisper. "A splendid physique—such as any man might envy him, but a rotten constitution!"

"I always thought he was as strong as possible," looking up in surprise.

"I daresay you did—most people would."

"By-the-bye, how's your little daughter? I thought she looked quite charming at the dance!"

"She's pretty enough," said the proud father, with a sad smile, "but she's not up to the mark somehow. She used to go about as brightly as a kitten, and now she's duller than I am myself. I tell you this in confidence—anything upsets her nerves. When she heard of this accident to night she positively fainted away—though she knows nothing of Sir Eric, and has scarcely exchanged a dozen words with him in her life."

A sound came from the bed which made both the men look up hastily, but the Baronet was lying quite still, with closed eyes, so they resumed their conversation.

"I'm awfully sorry to hear it," said Cyril kindly. "Send her away for a bit; that will do her all the good in the world."

"But where shall I send her?" asked the doctor, looking perplexed.

"To the Towers!"

If a bomb had dashed into the room, and blown the furniture to pieces, neither could have been much more astonished than by this sudden suggestion from Sir Eric.

The doctor stared as if he could scarcely believe his ears.

"I'm afraid we've disturbed you, Sir Eric. I didn't know you could hear us."

"I say, send your little girl to us. We'll see that she's all right."

"You are very kind," began the doctor, who, to judge from his countenance, had no intention of accepting the kindness.

"Then that is settled," and the invalid closed his eyes.

Mrs. Seddon and Whistler remained in charge, whilst Cyril retired to a bed room to get some rest, and Dr. Whitehead drove home, promising to return in order to superintend the move.

The brake had not been ordered till ten o'clock, and it was now past three, so they had a good deal of time before them; but it is hard to sleep when the brain is worried.

Cyril could not get Brenda out of his head. If he were not tied by his honour, he would have made love to her with all his might, and seen if he could not cut out Desborough; but he was bound to let her see more of the world, and not to take advantage of her inexperience.

And yet, why was he bound when all other men were free to woo and win her if they could? Was it simply because Lady Sophia thought a thousand a year too small an income for a son-in-law? Was it because of this he was to let Brenda go in all her sweetness and beauty to the greatest scamp alive, if only he happened to be a millionaire?

Oh! the narrow-mindedness of some women, who think carriages and horses, a life of ease, and a large house, with a crowd of servants, very good equivalents for love, which can secure happiness when almost everything else is wanting!

His heart cried out to the girl he loved, as he lay wide awake in the chilly dawn, but she could not guess it.

For the first time in his life he felt sorry that Mr. Parkinson had arrived too late. If he had come in time for his grandfather to alter his will, Sir Peter would probably have left him a large slice of his fortune.

And just a few thousands would have made all the difference in the world; for, with them at his bankers, he would have taken his courage in both hands, and asked Brenda to have him for better for worse, whether Lady Sophia liked it or not.

# CHAPTER XXXV.

"Where's Lady Manville?" That was the first question asked by Cyril Farquhar as he put his fair head in at the door of the breakfast-room, where Brenda had been waiting for him in eager impatience.

She had watched Sir Eric being carried

into the room prepared for him on the ground-floor, and then retreated to the only place downstairs where she was likely to be left in peace, in the hopes that Cyril would join her.

She had been dreading, as well as longing, to see him, and now she felt chilled by the gravity of his face, and the fact that his first inquiry was after Lady Manville, a lady in whom he generally took small interest.

"I suppose she's in the housekeeper's room. But won't you have something to eat? You look so tired," giving a timid glance in his direction.

"Thanks, I breakfasted at the inn. It's having these things on makes me look disipated and queer," with a glance at his dress things, over which he still wore his light overcoat.

"There are some clothes of yours in your old room. Won't you go up and change?" wondering why he did not come in and sit down to have a chat. Was it because he no longer cared about her at all?

"I can't wait. I must go and speak to the old lady, and then I'm off. By-the-bye where's Mrs. Wyndham?"

"Haven't you seen her?" in great surprise. "She went out riding quite early this morning, and I knew, of course, she was at 'The Rose and Crown.'"

"I thought she was never down till twelve."

"No more she is, but I suppose she was anxious about Eric."

"But she hasn't been near him!"

"Are you sure? I think she must have been. Perhaps she felt shy, and kept out of your sight?"

Cyril smiled incredulously.

"When Mrs. Wyndham contrives to be shy I shall expect the world to come to an end. But what on earth can she have been up to? This is a mystery."

He looked very much puzzled, and Brenda equally so, till it suddenly flashed across her that she might have been in search of Paul Desborough.

She could not betray his confidence, so she said nothing; but she longed to give Cyril a hint of the real state of affairs between those two, for it seemed too dreadful for Sir Eric to marry a woman whose heart was given and vowed to another!

"Well, I give it up as a bad job! I mustn't wait another moment. Good-bye, Bren!"

He was actually going off with a little nod as his only greeting; and the poor girl's heart had sunk to the depths, when a sudden remembrance shot through his mind, and the resolution which he had struggled so bravely to keep up gave way, like a barrier of sand before the first billow of a storm-tossed sea.

He closed the door, to the handle of which he had been clinging all the while, as if afraid to loose it, and crossed the room with quick steps.

She got up from her chair, whilst her colour came and went in her cheeks; and yet she told herself that he was engaged to Maude Allingham, and she only liked him for auld lang syne.

He held out his hands and took hers into his firm, strong clasp, looking down into her face with a passionate yearning in his blue eyes which was more eloquent than a thousand words.

"Oh, Bren! if I could only be here to take care of you! Be true to yourself, whatever happens! Never give in for one moment to what you know to be wrong. If Desborough ever dares to put his foot inside the house, remember what I told you of him once, and appeal to Lady Manville for protection."

"To Lady Manville?" she asked, in surprise, chilled by the thought that he would not, for some inscrutable reason, tell her to appeal to himself.

"Yes; she is a woman and a mother. I think she will look after you, when—when I have spoken to her. Don't trust Eric; he thinks of no one but himself. And now—good-bye!"

"You are in a great hurry to go!" she said,

unsteadily, scarcely able to suppress the sob which rose in her throat, and seemed as if it would choke her.

A sudden thought darted into his mind, and he let her question remain unanswered.

"Did that fellow dare to kiss you?" he asked, almost fiercely.

An overpowering sense of shame came over her, and crimson dyed her cheeks. This was answer sufficient.

"He deserves to die for it!"

"Oh, tell me! You won't fight him?" looking up at him with earnest, appealing eyes. "Promise me, or I can't let you go!"

"Duelling is forbidden in England!" he said, looking away from her over the sunlit garden; "and I've no fancy for being hanged!"

"You are sure?" her lips growing white with the tension of feeling, as she thought of Mrs. Wyndham's fears.

"Certain, sure! Oh, Bren! I'm such a fool!" his lips quivering under his fair moustache. "I feel as if no one could take care of you but myself!"

"Then stay, and take care of us all!" she said, softly, the tears shining under her long lashes.

He shook his head, whilst his face grew white.

"Good-bye, Bren!" he said, in a choked voice. "Oh, dash it all! What's the good of humbugging? It's hard on any fellow to say good-bye!"

He stooped his head, one long, passionate kiss was pressed with eager lips on her sun-bright hair, and then he tore himself away, and hurried from the room.

Brenda threw herself down on the sofa, and remained there, quite still, lost in a dream.

Some twenty minutes later she heard his step crossing the hall, then the wheels of the dog-cart on the gravel, and knew that he was gone.

Just at the last, a horrible feeling came over her that she would never see him again.

She rushed to the window, but it was too late; the cart was already driving down the avenue, and she could only see the sun shining on the back of his head and the crown of his hat.

He was gone! and something seemed to tell her that he was gone for ever!

A feeling of the most horrible desolation came over her; and, sitting down on the first chair she came to, she leant her elbows on the table, and hid her face in her hands.

"Well, Major Winter, this has been a week of surprises," remarked Miss Joe McIntosh, cooking her sailor hat rather on one side. "But the most astonishing thing of all is that Miss Farquhar started from home with that good-looking Paul Desborough, dropped him by the way, and nobody has been to pick him up."

"Don't know about that. Mrs. Wyndham went for a ride at cock-crow."

"At cock-crow?" opening her eyes to their fullest extent.

"Well, between ten and eleven. I should think that was cock-crow to her. She must have meant to pick up some early worm."

"It's too much for me," shaking her curly head. "I can't understand it at all. But we've had a lovely time, and it's all over."

"I've had a lovely friend, and it's all over with me," he said, almost in a whisper.

"Not a bit of it," with a laugh and a blush. "The friend wasn't lovely, and—and you've survived."

"Survived, you call it, with the best part of me gone?"

"Mean man! You wanted it carried for you without paying the fare. I shall leave it in the lost property office."

"If you do, 'pon my word I'll advertise for John Winter's heart, lent to Miss Joe McIntosh, and never returned. That will look bad for you, you know."

"Worse for you. Stingy enough to lend it, instead of giving. I hate screws!" buttoning her gloves with unnecessary energy.

"You may call me a military hack if you like, but I'm not a screw!" drawing himself up in a martial manner.

"Well, to do you justice, I never saw you screwed," her eyes twinkling with fun at her own execrable pun.

"Can't you be serious for a moment?" he exclaimed, wrathfully, though he knew that his empty pockets made it positively necessary that he should steer clear of a proposal; he liked to hang about it as closely as he could, and he wished to think that Joe was hankering after what she couldn't get.

"Certainly," with the greatest composure. "I could cry my eyes out if it were worth while!"

"And it's not worth while, though you are saying good-bye to me?" looking at her with all the expression he could possibly throw into his light eyes.

"Not at all. You might come up to the value of one tear, no more. Anything extra would be waste."

"Why, anybody would give me as much as that! I expected more from you," ruefully.

"Blessed is he that expecteth nothing!" with a shrug of her shoulders, as she walked towards the door, as coolly as if she had never talked nonsense with him in the moonlight in her life.

Between last night and this morning there was all the difference in the world, for, as they rode side by side in the moonlit lanes, and his manner grew more tender as the minutes passed quickly over their heads, she thought he would ask her to be his wife long before they came back to the gates of the park. But they had actually drawn rein at the doors of The Towers before the important words were said, and she had gone to bed with the firm resolve not to trouble her head about him for the future.

She was not a mercenary girl—ready to sell herself to the first bidder; and if Major Winter had proposed she meant to accept him, in spite of his impecuniosity.

But she saw very plainly that he had not the slightest intention of doing so now, and she was determined not to let him think that her heart was touched, whilst he was only playing at sentiment.

Though she was an audacious flirt, and dangerously free and easy in her manners, she had a little bit of pride left, and on that she took her stand.

He hurried after her.

"You can't part from me like this? Tell me that I may follow you to Scarborough!"

"I know no law against it. Scarborough is big enough to hold us both, and there are more hotels than one. Good-bye." She held out her hand as she spoke.

He gave it an ardent squeeze, and did not seem anxious to get rid of it.

"You don't care for me the least little bit!"

"Yea, I do," snatching away her fingers. "The least little bit. You've exactly estimated it."

"You haven't got a heart!" angrily.

"Yes, I have, because I've never given it away. Why, there's the carriage at the door, and everybody waiting!" and she hastened across the hall.

All the guests were departing in a hurry, feeling themselves *de trop* on account of Sir Eric's illness.

Lord and Lady Pinkerton gave Brenda the most pressing invitation to Pinkerton Hall. The Miss McIntoshes assured her that Scarborough would be the very best place for her to pick up some colour for her cheeks.

Just as they were all going off Mrs. Wyndham rode up to the door. She stopped on the steps to bid them a gracious farewell, whilst Lady Manville eyed her with unconcealed surprise.

"My dear, where can she have been to? Eric has been asking for her incessantly. I think her conduct gets more and more extraordinary every day!" she remarked in an aside to Brenda.

She shrugged her shoulders, agreeing that

Mrs. Wyndham was very odd, but, thank goodness, that was Eric's business and not hers.

"Good-bye, Miss Farquhar," cried Lord Pinkerton, from the dog-cart. "If you ever want me, you know you can count on me."

"Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye!" from one and all with a general raising of hats and waving of hands and handkerchiefs, and they were gone! Every guest had left The Towers except Mrs. Wyndham, and she professed herself to be starving for want of food.

Lady Manville retired to the drawing-room, but Brenda accompanied Mrs. Wyndham into the dining-room and waited with some impatience whilst she ate a very good luncheon. When it was over they adjourned to the breakfast room; but, on the way, Brenda asked her if she were not going to see Sir Eric.

"Plenty of time for that later on," she said, coolly. "I've something to say to you, which must be said at once."

When the door was closed, she sat down on the sofa, and pushed back her yellow hair with her fragile, white hand.

"I suppose you can guess where I've been?" she said, with a weary smile. "To the 'Miller's Rest,' to find Paul Desborough!"

"Did you tell him never to come here again?" Brenda asked, with an indignant flush on her cheeks.

"No, for the best of all possible reasons—he was not there to tell."

"Then you've found out nothing?"

"Yes, I have. I found out that he wrote to Cyril Farquhar, and sent the note by a messenger to Thornton Hall."

"Cyril came here."

"Oh, why didn't you tell me before? What did he say? Why didn't you keep him?"

"I couldn't; he was in such a hurry. He only waited to see that Eric was all right, to speak to Lady Manville, and to say half-a-dozen words to me. He seemed in a most fearful hurry to get away."

"Of course, just what I should have expected! Do you know what you must do? You haven't left cards at Thornton Hall. Carry off Lady Manville, and drive over at once. When there, pump that girl who wore the pink dress; she will know more about him than any of the rest."

"But—but—Cyril would be so astonished!" shrinking from the idea of running after him.

"I only wish to Heaven he might be there to be astonished. You don't seem to realize the position. If these men fight, do you suppose it will be under the elms of Thornton Park?"

"Don't talk of it!" with a shudder.

"But I must. It shan't happen if I can prevent it, and I think I can. I rode from the 'Miller's Rest' to the station, and was mortally afraid of coming on all the people from here. Paul Desborough went up to town by the eleven express. If it had not been for Eric, I would have thrown myself into the train and followed him."

Brenda's breath was nearly taken away by her audacity; but she only suggested that it would be too unkind for them all to desert her guardian.

"Of course, I should stay with him. That would be my duty."

"And your pleasure, I hope?" looking earnestly into the pretty face which had such an expression of anxiety on its delicate features.

"My pleasure, *cela va sans dire!*" Brenda, answer me frankly. Supposing these two men fight, would you marry Desborough if he killed Cyril Farquhar?"

The poor girl's face turned white to the very lips.

"How can you ask?"

"Then you can't care for him much?" triumphantly.



"I loathe the very sight of him," she said, vehemently.

"Would nothing induce you to marry him?" watching her narrowly.

"Nothing! I would much rather die."

"Then, may I ask why you let Eric propose to me? It was a great mistake," shaking her head. "You ought to have married him yourself. I can't understand it."

"What can't you understand?"

"You are a good girl! You wouldn't tell me a lie!" looking up eagerly. "Is there anything against Eric? Any awful sin on his mind?"

"Good heavens, no!" starting back in horror, as her way to the door. "What on earth made you think so?"

"He is a man, is he?" dropping her voice to a cooed whisper.

"No! of course not. Who put such a fearful idea into your head?"

"I don't know. It got there somehow. Well, I want to go to him, I suppose; but don't leave me here for hours. Hurry off, and be as quick back as you can."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Sir Eric had been taken to his private study, which was hastily fitted up like a bedroom. The furniture looked heavy—the oak paneling, though handsome, gave a gloomy appearance to the whole, which was enhanced by the thick, dark tapestry curtains.

Over the high, carved mantelpiece hung a portrait of the late Baronet, painted by a Royal Academician about twenty years ago. It was a powerful picture and a striking likeness, the artist having caught the exact expression of the large dark eyes shining with a strange lustre from under bushy eyebrows.

Sir Eric hated the picture, and always turned his back to it as he sat at his desk; but now, as he lay on the sofa, having positively refused to go to bed, he faced it, and could not escape from the gaze of those terrible eyes.

They awoke his slumbering conscience, and brought the hateful past before him with fearful distinctness.

When he woke from the long sleep of exhaustion, and opened his heavy eyes, the first thing he saw was the face of the dead, staring down at him with the sternness of an avenging angel.

It gave him such a shock in his enfeebled state that his valet found him almost in a fainting condition, with a cold sweat upon his forehead.

He hastily poured out a restorative, gave it to his master, and, disliking all responsibility, went after Lady Manville, who sent him on to Mrs. Seddon, who was enjoying a much-needed nap.

The housekeeper, cross at being disturbed, said she wasn't going to stir, "not was it ever so," and advised him to find Mrs. Wyndham, who was soon going to take the master for better or worse, so she might just as well have a taste of him at his worst, and see how she liked it.

Meanwhile, Lady Manville and Miss Farquhar drove off to Thornton Hall in the landau, with its pair of spirited bays—the former inclined to chat and have a cheerful gossip over the delinquencies of the Miss Mcintoshes—the latter weighed down by such a load of anxiety that she could scarcely find a word to say.

How could she laugh over Joe's attempted flirtation with the Viscount, who was too fond of his own little wife to be attracted by a fast girl, who had evidently fallen in love with his title; or join in the widow's railery at Joe's unsuccessful efforts to catch Major Winter, who liked to go to the full extent of the rope, but knew how to keep his head out of the noose?

She had been amused as well as disgusted at all the manoeuvring round her, and at any other time would have laughed heartily over the various little contrivances which upset the best-laid schemes.

But now, with the thought of Cyril's danger

uppermost in her mind, she could barely scrape together either an assenting monosyllable or the ghost of a smile.

Lady Manville, at last, subsided into silence, putting her complaining down as hopelessly in love with that horrid Mr. Desborough, against whom Cyril Farquhar had warned her so solemnly that morning.

Fortunately, the man had mysteriously disappeared, and during Sir Eric's present state of health it was not likely that he would receive another invitation to The Towers.

She had been through a very disagreeable experience lately; but it seemed as if they would settle down for the present, and be nice and quiet. Really, she felt quite cheerful now all those odd people had gone.

Mrs. Wyndham, it was true, was left behind, but she would be too much occupied with the invalid to get much in the way of her mistress; and Sir Eric's illness would serve to delay the marriage, and therefore enable him to retain her comfortable quarters for some time longer.

These were pleasant reflections to one of her entirely selfish disposition, and Lady Manville wore her most charming smile as she entered the Countess of Thornton's drawing-room with Brenda's graceful figure in her train.

Lady Thornton was most gracious to the two ladies, as she found, to her relief, that they were unaccompanied by "that odious little woman," as she called Mrs. Wyndham. She regretted extremely that all her daughters were out, but Miss Allingham soon came into the room with a basket of flowers, and after being formally introduced, sat down by Brenda and began to talk to her.

She looked very pretty in a tailor-made dress of tweed, with steel buttons. Her dark hair was piled on the top of her well-shaped head, which she carried gracefully with a certain admixture of pride.

Brenda did not wonder at Cyril being attracted by her, as she was just the style to suit his fastidious taste. She looked at her with mournful eyes, which Maude thought inexpressibly sweet.

"Your cousin told me that he had seen you this morning," she said, with a smile, which brought furious blushes to the poor girl's cheeks. "How terribly frightened you must have been by Sir Eric's accident! Accidents seem to run in your family. Mr. Farquhar on the night of the dance must needs fall down and cheat me out of my favourite waltz, and Sir Eric goes out for a quiet ride and tumbles off his horse in the middle of the road. Will it be your turn next?"

"I shouldn't be surprised. Ill-luck seems to pursue me now."

"Don't say that. Mr. Farquhar was only telling me the other day that you were always bright as sunshine itself. You mustn't try to make me believe that you are more like a cloud," with a kindly smile.

"That is so like Cyril," her heart swelling, as she thought of him. "He always believes the best of everybody. How long is he going to stay here?"

"He went off directly after luncheon—didn't you know it? He said he was called away on important business, but he promised to join us at Brussels towards the end of the week."

"He is gone?" she could not help saying it with such an accent of disappointment that Miss Allingham looked at her sympathetically.

"I am sure he was sorry to go, for I never saw him look so perturbed in his life. And do you know one kind thing he said?" a slight colour rising to her smiling face. "Nothing would please him so much as that you and I should be friends."

"Very kind of him," murmured Brenda, feeling as if she should choke. "I—I don't see why you should like me—because—because you like him," getting crimson as she stammered it out.

"We all like Mr. Farquhar," said Maude,

quietly; "and my father has the highest opinion of his character and ability—therefore we can trust him when he says such pretty things about you. Perhaps some day you will come and stay with us in London?"

"No—no—no," thought Brenda, tortured by the thought of being obliged to look on at Cyril's courtship. Fortunately, Lady Manville rose to go, saying that they must return to the invalid—so she was relieved from the necessity of accepting; but she felt that she had not found out all she ought to, so reluctantly returned to the subject. "I suppose you don't know where he has gone?" she said with seeming carelessness, as they were walking towards the door.

"No; he was so unusually grave that I scarcely dared to ask him anything. If he did not return in two days he asked Lady Thornton to send on all his things to The Towers."

"Is he coming back to us?" she asked, with a throb of joy.

"I can't tell. Remember, he said, if all went well, he would join us in Brussels. I am so glad to have seen you!" with a cordial shake of the hand, and the sweetest smile.

"Won't you come over to The Towers?"

"I should like it of all things, but our time is so short that I'm afraid we shan't manage it. I know it is the loveliest place in the world. Good-bye."

"I wonder she did not make an effort to see Cyril's home," Brenda thought to herself, as they drove back at a brisk pace.

"That Miss Allingham is a charming girl!" remarked Lady Manville, as she settled herself in her corner. "They say that her father is absolutely rolling in riches, so I wonder that he is content with Cyril Farquhar for a son-in-law."

"If I were a father," said Brenda, her voice trembling with depth of feeling, "I would rather give my daughter to Cyril than to any other man in the world!"

"But then you are so hopelessly romantic, my dear! No daughter of mine would have let thirty thousand a-year slip through her fingers. They were too well brought up for that!"

"And I wasn't brought up at all, there's the difference!" with a curious smile, which was seen by nobody, and therefore not analysed.

Mrs. Wyndham, when left to herself, went up to her room, rang for Violette, and with her able assistance took off her habit and made a careful toilette.

She was possessed by a strange reluctance towards meeting Sir Eric after their somewhat tragic parting the night before, and the longer she was away from him the more she dreaded his questions about her long absence.

At last, when deprived of all further excuse for delay, she walked slowly toward the door.

"Madame is in no great hurry to see milord," Violette remarked, with a smile. "Madame was more eager this morning when she was going to see somebody else."

"No impertinence, if you please!" as the colour rushed to her face. "I was eager to get a breath of fresh air, as I always am after a bad night!" and she sailed out of the room with great dignity.

"For fresh air—read Monsieur Desbros!" murmured the French girl, with a satirical smile. "I could bet five francs it was to see him that you went out this morning before you had finished your first sleep. Ah, bah! I would not risk such a fine place as this for all the Desbros in the world!"

Meanwhile, Mrs. Wyndham reached the study door, knocked softly and went in. When her eyes first fell on the Baronet's face she experienced a violent shock.

It was impossible to believe that it was only last night that she rode by his side for miles through the moonlit lanes, and he seemed so well and bright, and in higher spirits than usual. Now he looked as if he had been ill for weeks.



[HAUNTED BY THE FACE OF THE DEAD.]

Every trace of colour had gone from his cheeks, and the darkest of circles had been painted by suffering round his haggard eyes. The bandage over his temple helped to make the effect more ghastly, and a pang of self-reproach shot through her heart as she went up to the sofa quite timidly.

"So you've come at last," he said, in the weak voice which was all that was left him at present. "You left me in a hurry last night, but you've not been in a hurry to come to me to-day. May I ask what you have been doing with yourself?"

"I went out for a ride. A breath of fresh air was necessary to me—I was so nervous, so unstrung. I had such a fearful night. Are you better? You look so dreadful!" bending down to kiss his large, white hand which had often pressed hers so tenderly.

Sir Eric frowned.

"So you went after Desborough directly my back was turned?"

"How can you say so?" breathless with dismay, thinking that some one had betrayed her. "I've never seen him since dinner-time last night when he looked so glum."

"Is this the truth?" looking at her fixedly. "Swear it by anything you happen to hold most sacred."

"I swear it by Heaven! Oh, Eric, don't you believe me?" the corners of her mouth drooping. "Are you so angry with me because I waited till I could have you all to myself?"

"Brenda came and arranged my pillows. She put some eau de Cologne on me with her soft little fingers, and made me feel a different man."

"Oh, if you prefer to have Brenda, do!" in an offended tone. "I'll go away and stay with the Hamiltons."

"No, no," hastily. "I'd rather ten thousand times have you, Lillian. The little wretch hates me all the time. I mean to conquer her, though, when I'm myself again. Do you know I were her I should kill me. She has the

courage; but she's too much of a saint for that sort of thing!"

"I hope so," with a little laugh. "Why don't you let her marry the man she likes best, and leave her alone?"

"Let her marry him!" the veins swelling on his forehead, his nostrils distending. "I'd see her pine to death first, and then I wouldn't! Has he got over you?"

"No, he hates me. But pray don't excite yourself, or else I shall have to go away!"

"Is Desborough in the house?"

"No. I believe he is miles away."

"Did he meet Cyril last night?" with a quick glance up into her face.

"Yes—I think so," hesitating, because she did not know how far it was safe to go.

"If they met it's fifty to one that they quarrelled. There's a good deal of nonsense in Desborough which the world has not knocked out of him yet, and Cyril's as romantic as a girl! They might be induced to fight," in a meditative tone.

"You can't wish it?" she asked, with a catch in her breath.

He turned to her with a smile curling the tips of his moustaches.

"It would save me a great deal of trouble if Desborough would shoot Cyril for me!"

"Eric!" she gasped, all the blood rushing into her face, and retreating as quickly, leaving it as white as her handkerchief.

Was it possible for her to link herself with a man who wished to do murder by second-hand?

Her thoughts went back to the days when she was an innocent girl, and her only hope in life was to be the wife of Paul Desborough. What happy, peaceful days those were which seemed so dull to her then! Twice to the church on the hill every Sunday, where her dear old father preached his beautiful sermons to the rustics who could not understand them, her only dissipation a yaly dance at the Hall, or a school-feast at the ivy-covered Rectory.

She was happier then than now, when she was about to sell herself body and soul for position and a fortune. Oh, if she could only go back over the dividing years, and take up the thread of her life afresh from her girlhood!

She looked so grave that Sir Eric thought he had frightened her.

"I was only joking," he said, with an attempt at a laugh.

"Then don't joke any more, for it turns my blood cold," she answered, with a shiver. Even as she shivered one of those two men might be speeding to his death, and who could tell but that Paul might fall instead of Cyril Farquhar?

"You are not very lively, I must say," Sir Eric began, fretfully. "You are utterly changed to what you used to be."

"If I am changed, it is you who have changed me. This house of yours gives me the blues, or the people in it! Make haste and get well; I can't stand it much longer!"

"You feel it too?" in a sepulchral tone. "Good heavens! I thought I was the only one! Look at that man," pointing to Sir Peter's portrait. "I know when it is dusk he will come down out of his frame, and—curse it!—I shan't be able to run away!"

"Eric—don't—you frighten me!" shrinking from him.

"No! no! We'll get away together—you and I—and leave Brenda to deal with the ghosts! Kiss me, Lillian—my own Lillian! You'll never desert me!"

She kissed him, but she gave no promise, and her lips felt as cold as her heart.

She was thankful when at last the sound of carriage wheels was heard on the gravel, and soon afterwards Lady Manville came into the room, diffusing an atmosphere of conventional cheerfulness all round her; but Mrs. Wyndham happened to look up, and catching sight of Brenda's grave face outside the open door, feared the worst.

(To be continued.)





[ATTACKED BY BRIGANDES !]

NOVELLETTE.]

## FAIR AND DARK.

## CHAPTER I.

"My mother always warned me against taking that girl," said Lord Norman, and a frown came over his severe, but handsome face. "She told me I should find Iola wilful and ungrateful, and I have done so much for that girl. It is certainly very discouraging."

There was an expression of perplexity on Lord Norman's brow as he glanced at a letter that lay upon the table. The matter was very annoying indeed.

Lord Norman was a very wealthy man, and a person of undoubted ability. It was well known to his friends that he had never done a mean or dishonourable action in his life, but still he was not a great favourite with anyone, being so cold and austere. He had been brought up strictly and sternly, with the result that his nature had been spoilt.

About two years before our story opens, Lord Norman, while driving a spirited horse through a crowded street, accidentally knocked down a girl. She was so much injured that it was considered necessary to convey her to a hospital, but Lord Norman would not hear of such a thing.

It was through him that the girl had been thrown down, and it was his duty to take care of her, and see that she wanted for nothing.

He placed her in his carriage, and drove her to his own mansion in Park-lane, where she was treated with every consideration, and in a few weeks was perfectly well.

During Iola's illness Lord Norman had gone to her parents, who were poor and struggling, and not at all nice people in any way. His offer to adopt Iola was accepted at once.

Lord Norman had not taken Iola from any sudden liking, but only from a sense of duty.

His mother was very indignant at his foolishness, as she called it, and declared that he would live to regret his act of kindness, but he only answered that, whatever came of it, he would do his duty, and look well after the girl.

Lady Norman had taken a violent dislike to Iola, who, to tell the truth, was passionate and self-willed, and inclined to be impudent at times.

It did not seem to Lady Norman that Iola was half respectful enough to her son for saving her from a life of labour and poverty, and possible degradation.

Lady Norman, Christian as she called herself, did sincerely believe that there was a vast gulf between the rich and the poor.

Iola, from the moment she became well, began ordering the servants about. She fully enjoyed the luxury that now surrounded her, and made up her mind to make the most of her position.

The strangest part of it all was that she took everything as a matter of course, and was not at all awe-struck at the splendid mansion or powdered footman.

If she had been presented to the Queen of England she would not have betrayed any nervousness, for Iola was a philosopher, young as she was.

In after years this natural ease of manner was very useful to her, and many girls of aristocratic birth, with any amount of blue blood in their veins, envied her self-possession.

Iola was very much hurt at her father and mother's eagerness to get rid of her, but she never thought how much she felt it.

There was one person, however, who regretted very much Iola's adoption, and this was Edward Varley, a boy about her own age, who was very fond of her.

She had never given him any encouragement—in fact, had treated him disdainfully; but he worshipped her, and, when possible, had always seen her to and from work.

"Now you are going to be brought up as a lady you'll forget all about me," said Edward, sadly; but Iola only gave a merry little laugh, that pained the lad much more than words can express. He did not like to see her so light of heart in going away, when he was so sad.

Iola could not help smiling at the change in the manner of her late employers. They had been none too considerate when she had been working for them; but now all was changed, and they apologised for their treatment of her.

The fact of her being adopted by a rich nobleman raised her in the estimation of a great many people, and Iola was sharp enough to observe this.

We may as well give the contents of the letter that annoyed Lord Norman so much.

"My lord"—it began—"I have put off writing this letter for some days, hoping that there would be some improvement in Miss Day's conduct, but although I have given her every opportunity to reform, she has resolutely continued to defy me, and even ridicules my authority to my face and before my other pupils. Her example has become contagious in the school, and the girls are growing as unmanageable as she is. I have only one course to pursue, and that is, to expel Miss Day, and I must request you to remove her from my school at once. It seems such a pity that she should go on in this way, for she is a bright and clever girl."

"The little demon! What in the world am I to do with her?" muttered Lord Norman, and his mother coming into the room overheard his words. Lady Norman was a handsome woman, but rather harsh and stern looking.

"I know of whom you are talking," she observed, with a slight frown. "You are speaking of Iola."

"Why, mother, how did you guess that?" asked Norman in surprise.

"Iola is the only little demon I know," said Lady Norman, as she seated herself.

Iola had always come home for the holidays, and there had always been disagreements between her and Lady Norman. Certainly the antipathy was mutual. There was no love lost between them.

"Well, the fact of the matter is that Iola has been expelled from school. Madame Leslie requests me to fetch her at once," said Lord Norman. "The girl is certainly acting very foolishly."

"She is acting disgracefully!" said Lady Norman, and there was a spiteful gleam in her eyes. "But then, what can one expect from a girl in her position in life? Did I not tell you that you would regret having taken her?"

"You warned me against her from the first," admitted Lord Norman, "and now never tired of telling me of it."

"You must send her back to her parents at once. I am so glad to think that you are released from such a great responsibility. I can tell you that it is a great relief to me."

"I can't send her back home, mother!" said Lord Norman in his earnest, decided way.

"Why not?" asked Lady Norman impatiently.

"Because it is my duty to do all I can for her. I have undertaken to me after her, and I mean to do it, cost what it may."

"You are very headstrong and obstinate," Lady Norman declared, "and I am sure that girl is not worth all that trouble."

"I do not think she is worth all the trouble myself," said Lord Norman; "but, you see, I have promised to look after her. Besides, I cannot take her back to her parents, for they have moved, and I don't know where they have gone to. It would be an act of cruelty to send her back to her miserable home after bringing her up to luxury and comfort."

"You could find out her people if you liked!" said Lady Norman, impatiently. "You'll find this adopted daughter a great nuisance when you are married."

"If ever I do," replied Lord Norman; and, seeing that he was resolute, Lady Norman ceased to argue with him, knowing that it would be worse than useless to do so. Lady Norman had never known her son alter his mind if he was once resolved upon anything.

The sense of duty was strong within him, and if he thought he was right, nothing would induce him to alter his determination.

Lord Norman had a stern sense of justice, and always acted straightforwardly according to his lights; but, in spite of the uprightness of his life, Lord Norman was not a happy or a contented man. Something was wanted in his life. There was a void that wanted filling up.

His existence was almost too monotonous and mechanical, and at times he would be overtaken with fits of depression with which he vainly tried to combat. It was seldom that Lord Norman laughed, and he always seemed quite surprised if he did so.

As soon as Lord Norman had snatched a hasty meal he started off to fetch Iola, feeling very angry with the girl for giving him so much trouble.

It seemed so much like black ingratitude that she should in this way act, considering all and everything he had done for her. He would speak to her very severely when they met; such conduct must not be tolerated.

In his own mind he now regretted nothing, allowed Iola to be taken to the hospital; but the past could not be recalled. The girl was on his hands, and he must make the best of it.

It would not have mattered so much if it had not been for his mother, who was so continually talking of Iola's delinquencies. He had grown quite tired of the subject, as can easily be understood, and often took the girl's part when he knew her to be wrong, simply because he was so much bothered about her.

Considering the way Iola had been brought up, allowances ought to have been made for her; but such was not the case.

Lord Norman was harsh and stern, and his mother, when she spoke to Iola, was harsh

and disagreeable, and altogether too patronising.

Iola was not proud of her position, and wished that her father had not been in such a hurry to get rid of her.

She felt she was living on charity and did not like it, and sometimes was inclined to run away from school.

Sometimes she was quite frightened of Lord Norman, and wondered he had taken the trouble to adopt her; at other times she would be insolently defiant.

Iola was a clever girl, and, although she was usually, always disappointed herself, and no governor complained of her for neglecting her lessons.

The school was not far from London, and Lord Norman soon arrived there. He was at once taken to Madame Leslie, who was profuse in her apologies for having expelled Iola; but her school would have been ruined, she said, in conclusion, for Iola was so very intractable.

Lord Norman owned that the schoolmistress was justified in what she had done.

"Now let me see Iola!" he said.

Madame Leslie went in search of Iola, and, Lord Norman, having nothing better to do, looked out of the window at the ball playing ground.

There was only one person to be seen in the distant place, and this was a girl on a swing. She resembled as Lord Norman was, he recognised Iola, and while he was looking at her Madame Leslie appeared upon the scene.

Iola was evidently of an obstinate disposition, for when Madame Leslie spoke to her, she told her she was wanted, she kept on swinging for fully five minutes before she would consent to come indoors.

Lord Norman saw this and frowned darkly, for it seemed as though Iola was quite incorrigible.

As Madame Leslie and Iola came down the garden path together, the lady looked as if she would have liked to have given the girl a good shaking, but she saw Lord Norman standing at the window.

Since her last act of disobedience Iola had not been allowed to associate with the other girls, who were now in the schoolroom, thus it happened that Iola was in the playground alone.

Lord Norman drew himself up and looked very stern, when the door was opened, and mistress and pupil entered the room. Iola looked very beautiful at that moment, and Lord Norman could not help noticing it, notwithstanding that her hair was hanging about wildly, and she was in a very untidy state, and did not look as a scholar at a fashionable boarding-school usually looks. The girl was in a more than usually defiant humour that morning, and her glaring, and wicked, mischievous eyes glittered defiantly, as she stood before Lord Norman.

"I am sorry to hear such a dreadful account of you," said Lord Norman, and his voice sounded dreadfully harsh.

"Oh, I know Madame Leslie has been telling awful stories about me," cried Iola; "but you must not believe all she says. You don't know how spiteful she can be. I declare she has pinched my arms till they are quite black and blue."

She turned up her loose sleeves as she spoke, and exhibited some very blue-looking marks, and Madame Leslie turned very red in the face, and looked uncomfortable.

Lord Norman saw at once that she had done what Iola accused her of; but he did not blame the schoolmistress much, seeing how troublesome the girl was. Lord Norman had often felt inclined to box her ears himself, but of course he was too much of a gentleman to strike a girl. Iola was certainly very aggravating, no one knew that more than he.

"I am sorry Miss Day ever came to my school," said Madame Leslie. "She has made all the young ladies almost as bad as herself. You have no idea, Lord Norman,

how self-willed she can be. I don't know what will become of her, I am sure!"

Iola looked at Madame Leslie and gave a defiant laugh, displaying her white, glistening teeth.

"I wonder you can laugh in this way after the disgrace of being expelled," said Lord Norman, severely. "You have displeased me greatly, Iola, and I don't know how to express my annoyance at your conduct, which is most unladylike."

"Is it such an awful disgrace to be expelled?" asked Iola, looking at Lord Norman incredulously, as if she did not take his words half seriously. Perhaps she was in hopes that he would smile, but he did nothing of the kind, and frowned darkly down upon her in his lordly displeasure, "looking at me just as though I was a naughty child," as Iola afterwards expressed it.

"It is a great disgrace, and worse for a girl than a boy," said Lord Norman. "I was quite angry when I received Madame Leslie's letter."

"And you look angry now," said Iola, folding her arms. "Don't frown at me like that, Lord Norman. It seems so unkind, for I feel sure I have done nothing to deserve it."

"It is my duty to tell you when you do wrong," observed Lord Norman, as he took out his purse to pay Madame Leslie's account. "It is very unpleasant for me to hear such a bad account of you; but although your conduct to Madame Leslie has been very bad, I am glad that you have not neglected your studies. You see I had faith when you do wrong, and praise you when you deserve it."

"I hate because I like it, and it comes easy to me," replied Iola. She was not trying to appear so arrogant that day. If Lord Norman had spoken to her more kindly he would have done a great deal more good; but it must be remembered that he did not care a bit about Iola, and it was only from a sense of duty that he took any trouble over the girl at all.

"If Madame Leslie would overlook your conduct, and let you remain here," said Lord Norman, quietly, "would you promise to be a better girl?"

"No," said Iola.

Then Madame Leslie gave Lord Norman a glance, which plainly expressed, "you see what a girl she is, a regular vixen."

"You are showing yourself in a more unfavourable light every moment," said Lord Norman, "and fully justify all that Madame Leslie has said against you. Be guided by me, and beg Madame Leslie's pardon."

"Her pardon!" said Iola, with flashing eyes, and her face grew flushed, and she actually stamped her feet. "Her pardon!" she cried, in a still louder voice, "I'd sooner die first, that I would, for I hate her!"

If Iola had been his own daughter he would have been even angrier than he was. She seemed so rebellious and defiant. It was difficult to know what to do with such a creature.

"I am sure I don't know what to do with you, Iola," said Lord Norman, looking at the girl as if she were some wild animal whom it was necessary to tame. "I really believe that you are growing worse instead of showing any signs of improvement."

"You need not scold me before her!" said Iola, pointing to Madame Leslie, and looking deeply mortified.

"Then you positively refuse to remain here, even if Madame Leslie consents to overlook your conduct?"

"If you leave me here I'll run away!" said Iola, desperately; and it was clear to Lord Norman that she meant what she said.

It was evident that Iola had a will of her own, and he saw that he would have great difficulty to manage the girl.

"In that case I suppose I must take you away!" said Lord Norman, in doubtful tones.

"Oh! how kind and good of you, Lord Norman!" cried Iola, in the greatest delight;



and in her gratitude she was quite demonstrative, and actually took his hand, to his surprise. "You don't know how hateful this school has become to me!"

"So you can be very gracious when you get your own way!" said Lord Norman, still stern and repellent.

"Of course, everyone likes to have their own way!" said Iola, looking bright and happy, to Lord Norman's secret satisfaction. "You don't know how tired I get of listening to the talk of a lot of stupid schoolgirls! I should like you to have to listen to it just for one week! I am sure it would drive you mad!"

"You'll find that you will not have your own way always," said Lord Norman; and then he added, sarcastically, "Perhaps you'll wash your face and hands, and make yourself presentable; and I think a comb and brush would improve your appearance a little bit!"

Iola looked half inclined to make some savage answer, but Lord Norman glanced at her so sternly that she was abashed for the moment, and went out of the room without speaking another word.

It was quite half-an-hour before she reappeared, and then it was evident that she had taken great pains with herself.

She looked so very beautiful now that it was strange that Lord Norman was not proud of his adopted daughter, but he only looked at her coldly and critically; but there was no admiration in his eyes, and Iola felt rather annoyed at this.

Lord Norman did not speak a word to the girl going up in the train, for he wanted her to understand how very angry he was.

The girl felt inclined to speak to him more than once, but he seemed so absorbed in his own thoughts that she did not like to do so. He appeared to have forgotten her very existence.

A carriage was waiting for them at the London station; and, as she stepped into it Iola heard a joyous cry, and, looking round, saw her old companion Edward.

"Oh, Iola!—Miss Day!" cried the young man, confusedly, "I am so glad to see you!"

He was poorly, but neatly dressed.

"Please don't make a scene!" cried Iola, who was evidently ashamed of her old companion. "I must say good-bye; I am now in a hurry!"

Lord Norman looked on with a bitter smile, and as the carriage drove away, and he saw the look of pain in the youth's face, he thought to himself,—

"Iola is utterly heartless!"

## CHAPTER II.

LORD NORMAN'S mother was not over gracious to Iola when she arrived at the town mansion. She was cruelly cold and disagreeable, and evidently desired that the girl should see how much she disapproved her presence in that house. Iola did not try to conciliate the old lady; it was not in her nature to do so.

Iola did not allow this cold reception to damp her spirits. She was so delighted to get away from school that nothing could hurt her feelings.

Bright and animated she looked, and her only regret was that Lord Norman should look so stern and cross.

It was a source of wonder to Iola that a man so handsome as Lord Norman, with such pleasant surroundings, should be so quiet and moody, and so awfully old for his age. It would be so very nice if he would make himself pleasant and agreeable. The house was certainly a dismal place for a young girl.

That evening Iola went to the piano unasked, and played and sang in a brilliant style, and real strength and feeling; but, if Lord Norman approved of her singing, he gave no indications of it; so Iola, after that night, did not venture to open the piano again when he was at home.

Lord Norman, although he surrounded Iola with every luxury, did not consider it neces-

sary to provide her with any amusements. He was trying to train up Iola as his mother had brought him up, but nothing could tame the girl's wild spirits.

Although Lord Norman showed so little partiality for Iola, the girl began to like him little by little. He seemed so grand and clever to her in every way, but she detested his horrid old mother!

She often wondered why a man in Lord Norman's position should work so terribly hard! Indeed, he kept himself so busy that he looked positively haggard at times.

At length Lord Norman became quite accustomed to Iola, and would have missed her, perhaps, if she had gone away. It was her hand that poured out his tea, and he sometimes found himself glancing at her admiringly. It was certainly a pity that Iola was not a better girl. If her temper had been as sweet as her looks all would have been well; but unfortunately it was not so. We must admit that Lady Norman did all in her power to put Iola in a most unfavourable light.

Very often, when Lord Norman came home tired and in need of rest, his mother would come and give him a long list of Iola's delinquencies, and then when she met the girl would wonder why he looked so cross, and scarcely utter a word to her.

Iola tried to take an interest in those things which occupied Lord Norman, but she found it a difficult task, for he was so much better and cleverer than she was; she often told herself.

There was not a man in London who gave away more than Lord Norman, but he had never been known to bestow a penny on a beggar in his life. Hospitals and asylums was where his money went, and he simply gave his money away from a sense of duty.

Iola had been from school about six months, and by that time could see that Lord Norman had many good and sterling qualities, notwithstanding his austerity of manner; but it was clear to her that he took his life a little too seriously.

"If I could only make him gay and light-hearted," she thought to herself, and immediately did all in her power to do so.

Iola, by a thousand womanly tricks, exerted herself to amuse Lord Norman, and great was her joy when she succeeded in culling a smile from him.

Lord Norman began to fancy he saw some improvement in Iola's behaviour, but the accounts his mother gave him of the girl's conduct drove him to despair. Iola was so nice and pleasant when in his society that he began to think that she must be cunning and deceitful, but such was not the case.

This is what it was. Liking Lord Norman, she did all that lay in her power to please him; detesting Lady Norman, she exerted herself to the utmost to vex her.

Doubtless, this was very wrong, but it was very natural.

One morning Lord Norman and Iola were breakfasting alone, Lady Norman being too unwell to appear. That morning Lord Norman was unusually cheerful and chatty, and Iola was delighted.

"If he would only be always like this and not reproach himself," she thought. "He seems to think it almost wicked to smile and laugh."

"Do you know, Iola, that you are improving a little!" said Lord Norman, kindly. "Only a little?" cried Iola, opening her eyes and blushing.

"Well, you are not half so wild as you were," said Lord Norman; "and I am sure you are growing more sensible."

Iola looked down at the carpet. She was so glad that Lady Norman was not there, for in her presence Lord Norman and Iola scarcely exchanged a word.

"I am afraid I am not very clever," said Iola. "Your mother is always calling me obstinate and stupid and ungrateful."

"My mother often complains to me of your conduct," observed Lord Norman, "and

it pains me very much. Why can't you try to please her? You ought to remember that she is so much older than you."

"So Lady Norman speaks against me behind my back," said Iola, firing up, and Lord Norman had not seen her in such a temper for a long time. "I now understand why you are sulky with me all at once, and won't hardly speak a word."

"Do you mean to tell me in all honesty that you do nothing to justify my mother's complaints to me?" cried Lord Norman.

Iola hesitated as to what reply she would make. She wished to stand well in Lord Norman's eyes, and yet she did not like to tell a lie. The struggle was over in a moment, and truth prevailed.

"Well, I do many things to worry your mother," she admitted.

"But why?"

"Because she don't like me and I don't like her," replied Iola.

For a moment the hard, stern expression came into Lord Norman's face, and Iola trembled, for of late she feared his anger greatly. Why, she did not know, because he would not hurt her. The harsh, domineering look remained on his face for a moment and then faded away as quickly as it had come, but the smile had not come back.

"Are you never actuated by a sense of duty?" asked Lord Norman, glancing at Iola with his keen and penetrating grey eyes.

"No," answered the girl.

"Then I am sorry for you," said Lord Norman, and the girl knew that she had offended him.

There was one thing that Lord Norman liked Iola for, and that was because she was truthful. He had never known her to sink to the meanness of a lie. In this respect she was honest herself. He could always take her word. It was above suspicion.

"Sorrow for me, Lord Norman!" cried Iola, struck by his manner and his tone. "Am I so very wicked, then?" and there were actually tears in her honest, dark-brown eyes.

"You are not wicked but thoughtless," replied Lord Norman, speaking in more gentle tones now that he saw those tears. "Now, don't you think it is your duty to obey my mother, seeing how much she is older than yourself?"

"I'll try and do so," said Iola gently; to Lord Norman's delight, and, seeing she had pleased him, the girl felt happy.

After this conversation Iola's behaviour to Lady Norman underwent a sudden change. She was kind and considerate, and put up with her ill-temper. The girl's amiability did not have the desired effect. On the contrary, Lady Norman grew more imperious and domineering, and made Iola's life as unpleasant as she could; but she was brave and resolute.

"Lord Norman has asked me to bear with Lady Norman, and I'll do it," said Iola; and she kept her word, although the task was a most difficult one to carry out. There is nothing more trying in the whole world than an attempt to conciliate a person who will not be conciliated—so, at least, Iola found.

Lord Norman heard no more complaints against Iola, for Lady Norman could not with justice make any, seeing that the girl did nothing to deserve them.

If it had not been for Lady Norman Iola would have been very happy; but still her life, on the whole, was a very pleasant one, particularly when Lord Norman was in the way.

Very often in the evening now Lord Norman would ask Iola to sing, and the girl would exert herself to the utmost to please him. He seemed to enjoy the evenings very much, and so did Iola; but Lady Norman did not like to see her son and the girl on such good terms.

Lady Norman regarded Iola with the greatest suspicion, for it occurred to her that she wished to marry Lord Norman for his money.

Lady Norman was very proud, and she did not like the idea of her son marrying a person whom he had taken out of charity.

Although Iola was educated and accom-

plished, Lady Norman could not forget that she did not come of an aristocratic family.

It seemed to the good lady that Lord Norman would be throwing himself away if he married Iola—a girl of the people.

Why had the girl so suddenly changed, and become so submissive? Lady Norman now did all in her power to make Iola lose her temper, by making use of taunts and insults.

The girl would not have been made of flesh and blood if she had borne such words in silence, and, although she regretted it afterwards, she answered back.

When Lord Norman returned home he found his mother in tears, and when he asked her what was the matter, she told him that it was that wretch of a girl.

Lord Norman sent for Iola and heard her version of the story, and was compelled to own that his mother was in the wrong.

White with passion, Lady Norman went out of the room, slamming the door after her in a very unladylike way.

There was a great deal of difference between the mother and son. All the time Iola had known him she had never heard him raise his voice in anger. If he was in a temper he always spoke like a reasonable creature. It was generally admitted by everyone that Lord Norman was a thorough gentleman.

"I think I had better go away," said Iola, bursting into tears, "for I had no intention of making a quarrel between mother and son."

It was the first real disagreement of a serious character that Lord Norman and Lady Norman had ever had, and he felt vexed.

"Where could you go to, child?" asked Lord Norman kindly.

"I neither know nor care," said Iola, in a low, sobbing voice. "But it is clear to me that I am not wanted here. You must see how unpleasant my position is in this house. I wish, when you had knocked me down, you had killed me."

"You are talking foolishly," said Lord Norman, sitting beside the sobbing girl on the sofa. "My mother will soon get over her temper."

"But not over her dislike for me," replied Iola. "Dislike, however, is not the word. I mean her hatred. What have I done to offend her?"

Iola seemed really troubled, and Lord Norman felt sorry for her, and tried to console her all he could, and that evening kissed her for the first time on her snow white forehead.

After the quarrel with her son, Lady Norman was fearfully polite to Iola; but she never had another disagreement with her. In fact, they spent as little time as they could in each other's society.

About this time Lord Norman came to the conclusion that Iola ought to have more pleasure, and not be shut up altogether in that lonely old house. He even planned himself for his selfishness in not thinking of it before, and took her to the opera, and a theatre, and even to a ball.

At this time Iola was perfectly happy; but a cloud came upon her unexpectedly when everything seemed so bright and so fair.

It is a strange thing, but directly Iola's eyes rested upon Rose Dudley she took a lasting antipathy to her.

A woman's instinct is generally infallible in these matters, and she felt this lady to be her enemy and rival.

Rose Dudley was some years older than Iola, and, when introduced, treated Iola in a patronising way, which the girl was sharp enough to resent.

Iola was not the kind of girl to be put upon in any way, and, before they parted, after their introduction, succeeded in making Rose lose her temper.

Lady Norman, on the other hand, was delighted with Rose, and invited her to come and see her.

The idea struck Lady Norman that her son ought to marry Rose Dudley. If she could bring this about she would spoil that designing girl's plans, as she called Iola.

Rose Dudley became a constant visitor at Lord Norman's house. She was a fair, plausible woman, and succeeded in making a favourable impression on his lordship.

She pretended to take a great interest in Lord Norman's philanthropic schemes, and they would often be seen together at charity meetings, and Lord Norman regarded Rose as a very good woman indeed.

She was not at all the woman he would fall in love with, but she was a very charming friend.

We will not tell all the wicked thoughts that came into poor little Iola's heart against Rose. She had known Lord Norman so much longer than her. Why should she come between them now? How she envied Rose when she drove or walked with Lord Norman!

Iola fancied that Lord Norman's liking for her grew less and less since the appearance of Rose. This was not really the case, for he liked her just the same; but then Rose Dudley was always attracting his attention to some new scheme and keeping him constantly in employment.

The activity of this woman was simply wonderful, and she seemed quite enthusiastic in the business, and seemed to enter into it heart and soul. Lord Norman was rich and handsome, and it was worth while to pretend to be charitable for the sake of winning him. Besides, philanthropy was fashionable just then, and quite the rage. Rose was a constant visitor at the children's hospital, and took any quantity of toys. Lady Norman was delighted at the turn affairs had taken. It seemed to her that she had completely outwitted Iola.

At first Iola grew cross and mopy, and then artificially high spirited, and seemed to take no interest now in frivolous amusements. The fact of the matter was that she had just made a discovery that filled her with terror and alarm. She had found out that she was in love with Lord Norman—a man who did not care for her a bit. Her pride was humbled to the dust when she found out the state of his heart. Very often she would sob herself to sleep, but before the world she was bright and animated.

It never does in this world to let others see what we feel. It is best to keep one's secrets, even if they are innocent ones. She behaved in just the same manner to Lord Norman, but kept out of his way when possible.

Iola often fancied that Rose guessed that she loved Lord Norman, and this idea terrified the girl. She would rather anyone know her secret than this woman, whom Iola was sure was not half so good as she would have it appear. Women are very clever in seeing into each other's minds.

"I really believe that my son is in love with Rose," said Lady Norman to Iola one evening. "Don't you think they will make a very handsome couple?"

She looked strangely at Iola as she spoke; but the girl kept a good command over her face, and the lady could read nothing from it. Iola was growing very discreet, and was learning to keep a stern command over herself, as women will when they have some great secret to conceal.

"They are both tall and handsome," said Iola, "and their tastes seem so much alike; but they have hardly known each other any time yet."

On the same evening when the above conversation occurred Lord Norman suddenly came upon Iola, and was greatly surprised to find her in bitter tears.

She had seemed so bright and happy of late that he was more than astonished. He had not the slightest suspicion of the truth. The girl made an attempt to rush from the room, but he would not allow her to do so. With gentle and kindly force he pushed her back into the chair, and when she ceased to sob took her hand in his.

"Why, what is the matter, Iola?" he asked in anxious voice, and his voice sounded softer in her ears than it had ever sounded before.

"Nothing!" was the reply.

"I am afraid my mother has been unkind to you," said Lord Norman, and he looked very angry.

"No, no! it is not that!" replied Iola.

"What is it, then? You can put confidence in me?"

"I don't feel very well," said Iola, "and when I am out of sorts I always feel low-spirited."

Lord Norman looked at her sharply, and saw that she looked very pale.

"Poor little thing!" he said, impulsively, "would you like to see a doctor?"

"There is no need for that. I dare say I shall be all right in the morning," said Iola.

"You generally have such good health," remarked Lord Norman, and he felt more interested in Iola than ever before.

This young girl had a wonderful influence over Lord Norman. If she had been a little older she would have known it, but, as it was, she was quite in ignorance of her power.

"I am usually in such good health that I don't quite understand being ill," said Iola, feeling strangely happy now that Lord Norman was at hand.

He was so very kind and considerate that evening. Lord Norman was still bending over Iola when Lady Norman and Rose entered the room.

Rose Dudley betrayed no annoyance at finding Lord Norman and Iola together. She was too much of a woman of the world to allow her real feelings to be seen.

With the sweetest smile in the world she kissed Iola, hating her all the time in her heart.

Iola disliked being kissed by this woman, whom she knew to be false and deceitful. No sooner had Rose entered the room than she got Lord Norman interested in one of his pet schemes, and then Iola slipped up to bed. Her absence was not noticed until half-an-hour after she had quitted the room.

"Dear me, what a strange girl that Iola is!" remarked Rose, as she put her eye-glass in her eye, and looked up at Lord Norman.

"Iola told me she was not very well to-night!" said Lord Norman.

"Not well!" said Lady Norman, "she generally has such very robust health. I always tell her she is like some great, strong, country girl!"

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN Lord Norman asked Iola about her health on the following morning there was great anxiety in his voice.

Iola declared that she was in the best of health and spirits, and looked it too. She had made up her mind not to be so stupid as to be caught crying again.

"Do you know," said Lady Norman across the table, "that Rose has taken a great fancy to you, Iola? She did nothing but speak of you yesterday evening."

"It is very good of her, I am sure," said Iola quickly, "to think of a humble person like me. Perhaps it is a pity I am not in distress, as Rose, being such a philanthropic person, would take such a keen delight in helping me. By-the-bye, Lady Norman, has Rose always taken such an interest in the poor?"

"No, only lately," replied Lady Norman.

"Then there is no great wonder in her being so enthusiastic," observed Iola. "Do you really think now that her interest in doing good deeds will last?"

Lord Norman thought that Iola's remarks were ill-natured and uncalled for. Rose had done nothing to merit such remarks upon her conduct.

Seeing the look of displeasure that came over his face Iola regretted having spoken; but then Rose Dudley's charity did not seem at all genuine. "If I was a person in distress," thought Iola, "she is the last person I should think of asking for assistance."

It was on that day that Iola met some one who had a great influence on her life. In the



afternoon Lord Norman, Rose, Lady Norman, and Iola went to an artist's studio to see a wonderful picture that all London was talking about.

The artist's name was John Templeton. Directly his eyes fell upon Iola he was struck by her beauty. Iola could not help noticing the warmth of his glances, and felt greatly annoyed and confused. He kept his eyes so constantly upon her during their stay in the studio that Iola was really relieved when it was time to leave.

It is not difficult for a clever man who has made a great hit to get into the best society, and notwithstanding that John Templeton had risen from obscurity, he was received everywhere with open doors. He had been working very hard of late, and was glad of the change. Being a vain, conceited man he was naturally glad of the flattery he received.

Iola often met this gentleman both at her own home and out at other people's houses. She had not liked the man from the first, but for some reason Lady Norman contrived to get them together. John Templeton was objectionable in Iola's eyes; but of course the girl was not so rude as to let him see it. The artist, just because Iola was polite to him, seriously considered that the girl was in love with him. He was one of those absurd persons who believe themselves irresistible. He ought to have known better than this, considering the many snubs he had received in his life. There are some people in this world who never can learn from experience.

In time Iola became more amused than annoyed with John Templeton, and even listened to his wild and extravagant protestation of love. It was fun, after all, to have this lover, whom Iola was quite sure was not the kind of man to break his heart over any woman. He talked too fluently to be quite sincere, and had evidently had great experience in the art of making love. There was some excitement in having this fellow in attendance upon her, and it kept Iola from dwelling too often on Lord Norman and making herself miserable.

John Templeton was one of those men who fall in love with a pretty face for the time being, and when the novelty wears off fly after a fresher beauty.

Lord Norman did not like to see Iola so often in the company of John Templeton. It is best to tell the truth, and to state at once that he was jealous. He did not like the idea of Iola throwing herself away on that artist fellow, and was half a mind to tell her so, but he did not do anything of the kind.

If Iola had known how bitterly jealous Lord Norman was, how gratified she would have been!

But he had kept his secret from her just as successfully as she had hidden hers from him, so they were both in ignorance of winning each other's love—as often happens in this world.

If Lord Norman had had the least suspicion of the truth he would have eagerly asked Iola to be his wife.

Somehow, Lord Norman could not fall in love with Rose, notwithstanding her goodness and charity. It is never possible to guide the human heart, and all the affection he had to give had fallen upon Iola, who, he believed, only had a certain amount of friendship for him.

Iola little knew how Lord Norman suffered when he saw her talking to John Templeton. More than once he felt inclined to rush forward and violently assault the artist, and it was only a sense of duty restrained him.

Lord Norman felt angry with his mother for having asked John Templeton to the house, and told her so. "I cannot bear the fellow," he declared, and Lady Norman saw that he meant what he said.

"I invited him for dear Iola's sake," said Lady Norman, with a smile.

"For Iola's sake!" repeated Lord Norman, almost fiercely, and for the moment it seemed to him that his heart had stopped beating. "I don't understand you, mother!"

"Surely you must be blind!" said Lady

Norman, with an air of superior wisdom. "I and Rose have seen it all along."

"Seen what?"

"That Iola is madly in love with John Templeton," observed Lady Norman. "Why all the servants have noticed it, I am sure!"

Lord Norman said not another word, but it was clear to Lady Norman that he was quite upset at the news she had given him. He had even turned white to the lips, and was evidently suffering keenly. Iola had unintentionally brought sorrow upon him, but still he was glad they had met. Looking back Iola seemed like a part of his own life. How dismal his home would seem without her! He hardly dared to think of it.

"I didn't think that this fellow Templeton was the kind of person she would like," observed Lord Norman, after a moment's reflection.

How he regretted having gone to the studio that Sunday afternoon! But for that, in all probability, John Templeton and Iola would never have met. He felt glad now that he had not told Iola of his love.

Rose came to fetch Lord Norman to go to some public meeting, the object of which was to raise money to help poor children to have a day in the country.

That night Rose's voice grated upon his ear, and he half doubted her sincerity. Great was her surprise when Lord Norman refused to go, making some very wild excuse.

"I am afraid you have quite offended Rose by your abruptness and rudeness," said Lady Norman, when the lady had gone.

"I had no intention of being rude," said Lord Norman, looking abashed, for he was too much of a gentleman to be guilty of any slight to a lady.

"You were rude, nevertheless."

"Then I'll apologise to Rose Dudley the next time I see her," observed Lord Norman.

"I can't do anything more than that."

"She is sure to forgive you," was the reply.

"For she is very fond of you."

"Do you think so?" said Lord Norman, somewhat alarmed. "This idea never occurred to me before, but I really think that you are right."

"I should so like to see you married and settled!" said Lady Norman, looking up at her son with all a mother's love and pride.

"I don't think it right for a rich man of good family to be a bachelor. I don't think you could do better than to marry Rose. You see your tastes are so very similar. Then, again, Rose is no longer a girl, and is of a sensible age. She is not giddy and thoughtless, like Iola, for instance."

Lord Norman could not help thinking that Rose was not to be compared with Iola in any way, but he discreetly kept his thoughts to himself.

That night he met Iola in the hall, and she seemed to avoid him, and this made Lord Norman very wretched, for if she was in love with Templeton there was no need for her to treat him in such a manner. He was deserving of some sympathy at her hands.

"One moment, Iola," he said, quickly, and the girl turned round and came back to where he was standing and looked at him inquiringly, but never spoke one word. She looked strangely embarrassed, he thought.

"I have only called you back to tell you," remarked Lord Norman, speaking in a stiff, constrained manner, "that I'll not oppose your wishes in any way. Good-night, Iola. I hope you'll be very happy, but I really do think you might have made a better choice."

The girl looked at Lord Norman in the greatest surprise, and then quickly vanished.

As she shut her bedroom door there was an expression of infinite wonder on her face. Was Lord Norman laughing at her? No, it could not be that, for he had looked so very grave.

After Lord Norman's refusal to accompany her, Rose Dudley did not put in an appearance for two days. She did not wish him to think that she would put up with anything she

might do or say. He thought that the lady was rather unreasonable, but apologized all the same.

Having made the discovery, as he thought, of Iola's love for Templeton, Lord Norman could scarcely take any interest in things that usually interested him. He even felt inclined to throw up his many benevolent schemes in disgust; but a strong sense of duty at length prevailed, and he resolved to continue in his good work.

It is difficult to say who suffered most at that time—Iola or Lord Norman. They were both certainly very unhappy, and seemed quite ill at ease in each other's presence. They kept their secret well, however.

Templeton, although a clever artist, was a man of lazy inclinations, and it occurred to him that if he married Iola he would be doing a very wise thing. She was Lord Norman's adopted daughter, and, of course, Lord Norman would provide for her.

It never entered into Templeton's head that Iola would refuse him, for he had a very great opinion of himself. It was his idea that his appearance and his manner was irresistible.

"I will propose this very night," thought Templeton, as he jumped into a cab. He was in the best of spirits, and felt more than usual confidence in himself. He fell into a deep fit of abstraction, but the sudden stopping of the cab recalled him to life.

His disappointment was great when on entering the reception room he found only Lady Norman. She was very gracious to him, and this flattered the artist, but he did nothing but wonder where Iola could be. He did not like to ask about her, for fear Lady Norman might see how anxious he was. The lady was of keen perception, however, and read what was passing in his mind.

"I hope you will excuse me, Mr. Templeton," she said, rising from her chair, "but I have promised to visit Lady Westbrough, and my carriage is waiting for me."

"Lady Norman, I hope I have not detained you," said Templeton, taking up his hat. "I only just called in while passing."

"Would you not like to see Iola before you go?" asked Lady Norman, looking at him keenly.

"I—I!" began Templeton.

"You'll find Iola in the garden," said Lady Norman; then added, in a significant voice, "and quite alone! I have no doubt that she will be pleased to see you!"

Lady Norman quitted the room by the door, and at the same time Templeton passed out through the window.

Iola was in her favourite corner in the garden, and on hearing the sound of footsteps looked up sharply. A look of annoyance came to her face on seeing Templeton. She was growing tired of his attentions. No sensible woman likes a conceited man. She was just in the humour to be alone, and did not feel inclined to talk at all. The day was a hot one, and she felt languid and quite indisposed to listen to Templeton's nonsense.

It was the very worst time he could have chosen to make a proposal of marriage, but Templeton did not know this. Although Iola greeted him with the conventional society smile he might have noticed the look of annoyance on her face that she vainly tried to repress.

"Lady Norman told me I should find you here," said Templeton, sitting down beside Iola quite uninvited.

"I suppose she was bored by him and therefore sent him to me," thought Iola. "It is very kind of her, I am sure. Why couldn't she say I was out? She knows perfectly well I did not want to be bothered with him!"

"I came here because I like to be quiet," said Iola; but Templeton did not take the hint.

"You are fortunate to have such a green, shady garden in London," said Templeton, not feeling quite so confident as he did a moment ago. There was something in the girl's manner that disconcerted him. There was

an interval of silence, and then Templeton continued, "I am pleased to find you quite alone, Miss Day."

"Why?" asked Iola, who was leaning back lazily in her chair, with half-closed eyes.

"Because I have something of importance to say to you," said Templeton, drawing his chair nearer to hers. "It depends upon you, Iola, whether I am to be the happiest or the most miserable of men."

"You have no right to call me Iola!" said the girl, haughtily. "I only allow my most intimate friends to call me that, Mr. Templeton."

The artist's embarrassment was really painful to witness. Knowing he had made a blunder, he racked his brain to find some way of repairing it. Before he had said a dozen words he had managed to offend Iola. It was certainly a bad beginning.

Templeton was furious with himself.

"I am losing my wits," he told himself.

"I am sorry I gave you offence Miss Day," he said, "and trust you'll forgive me."

Iola was in a very mischievous humour that day, and enjoyed the artist's evident embarrassment. She almost guessed what he had come to tell her, and even took pleasure in tormenting him.

"I will certainly overlook it this time," she said.

"You make it very hard for me to speak," cried Templeton, "but I must do so all the same. I can endure suspense no longer, and must tell you my feelings in regard to you. To-day I lose or win all. From the first moment my eyes fell upon you I was captivated with your loveliness, and it was not long before you stole my heart. Oh I give me only the faintest hope of my winning you—one little word of encouragement—and you will make me the happiest of men."

"I can give you no hope," replied Iola. "If you love me as you say you do, I am sorry for you, but it is not in my power to care for you."

Before she could prevent it he took her resisting hand in his, and made one more wild appeal for her love.

"If you could only know the strength of my love, the extent of my devotion, you would never send me away. Have some pity for one whose only offence is loving you too dearly."

"Release my hand instantly!" said Iola, in angry tones, for she saw Lord Norman coming towards them, and did not wish him to think that Templeton was her lover.

Templeton still retained her hand, in spite of all her struggles, and Lord Norman turned back into the house with the impression that Iola was in love with the artist. Lord Norman went into the library, not wishing any one to see his ghostly face.

"Say that you will have some mercy upon me," continued Templeton. "One unkind word from your lips would drive me to despair."

With a violent effort Iola released her hand, then rising to her feet looked at him scornfully.

"Your conduct has been beneath contempt!" she said, when she could get her breath. "I both hate and despise you."

The unkind word had been spoken, but still Templeton did not look quite like a despairing man, but he looked like a mortified one. At first he looked at Iola in the greatest surprise, then an angry flush came into his face, and he became absolutely brutal.

"I wonder you are so proud!" he cried, looking at Iola, vindictively. "You ought to remember that Lord Norman picked you out of the gutter, and has only adopted you out of charity."

Templeton had shown himself in his true light now, and Iola was glad that she had not given her heart into his keeping. To be married to such a man could only bring degradation upon any woman.

He had proved himself a scoundrel by his own words; but what did he care since he had no object to serve in hiding his mean nature?

"The words that come from such lips as

yours have no power to wound me," said Iola, raising herself to her full height, and giving him a keen glance that he could not meet. "I have only to tell Lord Norman, and he would chastise you for your cowardice—your insolence; but you are too despicable to be taken any notice of. If all men were like you, Heaven help the women!"

Iola turned away, leaving Templeton standing as if transfixed, as pale as death; the perspiration trickled down from his hair to his temples, and his hands actually trembled. Her words had stung him, for he knew that they were well deserved.

After giving one glance at Iola, Templeton passed out of a back gate, for he did not care to return to the house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

LORD NORMAN was firmly convinced that Iola had become engaged to Templeton, or she would not have allowed him to hold her hand in that way.

Lord Norman knew he was unjust, but he could not help feeling angry with Iola—unreasonably and jealously angry.

There was no earthly reason why Iola should not fall in love with Templeton, but somehow or other, he distrusted the man. He would have liked her to marry any person better than Templeton. He and the artist had never been good friends from the first.

Although Lord Norman disapproved of Iola's marriage with Templeton, he at once made up his mind to give her a handsome income. If Iola had not such an obstinate nature he would have warned her against Templeton, but he thought it would be useless to do so. As the girl had chosen for herself, without consulting him, she must take her chance of being happy in the future.

Iola's supposed engagement with Templeton brought good fortune to Rose, for, seeing he had lost Iola, Lord Norman made up his mind to ask her to be his wife. He did this on the very first opportunity and, need we say, was eagerly accepted.

It was not very long before Lord Norman regretted having taken this ill-advised step, but then, unfortunately, it was too late to draw back. It would have been dishonourable to do so, and Lord Norman had never been guilty of an unworthy act yet, and made up his mind that he never would.

One evening Iola came in the library for a book, and found Lord Norman there. The book was on a high shelf so he reached it for her, and then he handed her a chair and began talking to her.

"I have something to tell you that will surprise you," said Lord Norman, looking as awkward as a bashful schoolboy for the first time in his life.

"Have you, Lord Norman?" cried Iola.

"What in the world can it be?"

"Well, I am engaged to be married to Rose Dudley!" observed Lord Norman.

If the room had not been in semi darkness Lord Norman would have seen the effect his words had upon Iola. She became very pale, and her eyes had a sorrowful shade in them, and her face wore an expression of bitter pain.

How thankful she was that there was no light in the room, for she knew only too well that her face was bloodless. She felt that she must make some remark, and did so with difficulty.

"I hope you'll be very happy," she said, in a half-hesitating way, for she did not think that Rose was the kind of woman that Lord Norman should marry. She distrusted Rose just as much as Lord Norman distrusted Templeton.

"Well, I daresay I shall be as happy as most married people, Iola," said Lord Norman; then he added, after a moment's thought, "I think I have guessed your little secret."

Iola started, and the warm blush came back to her face. Surely he had not discovered her love for him, and was going to tell her of it!

"What secret?" asked Iola, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Why, I have discovered that you love Templeton!" said Lord Norman; "quite accidentally, however. Didn't I see you sitting hand in hand in the garden?"

"You have made a mistake," cried Iola, in indignant tones. "There is no one in the world that I despise like Templeton. I wish I could convey to you how much I loathe him. You saw him hold my hand, it is true, but he did so forcibly, and against my will."

A look of the greatest relief came into Lord Norman's face—relief mingled with regret. He was sorry that he had engaged to Rose now, and saw clearly the mistake he had made.

"If I had known the scoundrel was holding your hand against your will I'd have knocked him down!" said Lord Norman fiercely.

"I am glad you didn't do that," remarked Iola, and then passed from the room. The servant had come to light the gas, and she did not wish Lord Norman to see her agitated face. She felt utterly wretched to think that Lord Norman was engaged to Rose.

The last thing Iola could recollect was rushing from the room. She went up the stairs slowly and deliberately. She had scarcely strength to throw herself upon the bed, when she fell into a kind of stupor that made her forget her unhappiness for the time being.

When Iola saw Rose for the first time after her engagement with Lord Norman, she was, to all appearance, smiling and happy. Rose, on the other hand, became more patronising than ever. Her intention was to get Iola turned from the house directly she was married to Lord Norman.

Lady Norman was more gracious than she had been to Iola now that there was no chance of her marrying Lord Norman. She was rather surprised at the sudden cessation of Templeton's visits, but did not question the girl.

Lord Norman regretted his engagement more and more every hour he lived, for he soon found out that Rose was not so good as she had pretended to be. His eyes were open, but still he would not break off his engagement.

It was his duty to marry Rose if it ruined his life. Rose was not worthy of Lord Norman, and Iola knew that he would never be happy with her.

There was no escape from the abyss he had fallen into. He saw now that Iola was a much better woman than Rose, for there was no hypocrisy about her.

About this time Lord Norman became very unwell. No one but Iola had noticed that he was growing thinner and paler day by day. But her loving eyes had detected the change at once, and she had even ventured to warn him that he was doing too much.

"I don't feel ill, only rather tired at times," said Lord Norman; "but I will work less hard to please you."

Then their confidential chats ended. It became clear to Iola that Rose did not like to see her talking to Lord Norman, so she avoided him on all occasions.

At length, the doctors ordered Lord Norman to Italy, not so much for change of air as to get him away from the scene of his labours.

Nothing would delight Rose more than a journey to Italy. There was just one reason why Lord Norman had been so ready to take the doctor's advice. He had hoped that—for a few weeks, at least—he would lose sight of Rose.

He was bound to marry her, but that was no reason why he should always have her near him before their marriage. Iola, too, felt dissatisfied when she heard that Rose was going with them.

Of course, Iola was very unreasonable to be annoyed at this, but it is impossible for people to control their feelings.

With rich people travelling is a very easy thing, and, having made up his mind to go, it was not very long before Lord Norman and his party were in Italy.

The first person whom Iola saw in Rome



was Templeton. She passed him very close, and pretended not to see him.

"Have you and Templeton quarrelled?" asked Rose, who had noticed Iola pass him by as a stranger.

"Mr. Templeton is a clever man, but not a gentleman," replied Iola, "and I do not care about associating with him."

"You are very particular in the selection of your friends!" said Rose, sneeringly.

There was an angry retort upon Iola's lips, but then she suddenly remembered that Rose was Lord Norman's affianced wife, and she checked herself.

Rose now always made herself as unpleasant as she could to Iola when Lord Norman was not in the way.

Iola often wished he could know how spiteful Rose was; but the woman was very cunning. Although she was engaged to Lord Norman she felt greatly afraid of Iola. She would not feel safe until she was married to Lord Norman, she told herself.

Iola had been thinking matters over of late. After some deliberation she had come to the conclusion that it would be better for her to be independent.

"When Lord Norman is married Rose will regard me as an interloper," she thought, so decided that, on returning to England, she would get a situation.

She knew well enough that she would find it very hard to earn her own living after the luxury she had enjoyed, but she would be more wretched still with Rose.

There was some little improvement in Lord Norman's health after he had been a few weeks in Italy; but time hung very heavily on his hands sometimes, and he grew very restless.

"I believe he will soon return to England again," remarked Lady Norman to Iola, and the girl agreed with her in this.

It was now Lord Norman's habit to leave the ladies in some out-of-the-way village while he took to tramping about by himself.

He was walking up a steep, dusty road one evening when half-a-dozen picturesque dressed men came from behind some rocks. They were all well armed, and looked aggressively at Lord Norman.

One glance told Lord Norman that they were brigands, and in an instant his mind was made up. Without the slightest warning Lord Norman fired a pistol at the foremost brigand, whose body went rolling down the hill.

Angry cries came from the brigands, but, before they could cover Lord Norman with their rifles he had bounded behind a rock. A narrow path led up to it, and Lord Norman made up his mind to sell his life dearly.

If the brigands had been twice as numerous as they were it would have been just the same to Lord Norman—he would have shown fight.

It was not in his brave, courageous nature to surrender himself into the hands of these picturesque scoundrels, who were quite astonished at the promptness of Lord Norman's action.

Most persons, thus attacked would have been panic-stricken, but Lord Norman had nerves of iron. Although he was not happy, and did not value life much, he resolved to sell it as dearly as he could, so he waited, showing his white, glistering teeth, while the brigands hesitated below. They certainly had an ugly customer to deal with.

Now, if Lord Norman had surrendered himself into the hands of the brigands, they would not have hurt a hair of his head, knowing full well that they would receive a handsome ransom. Lord Norman knew this full well, but he did not think it right to encourage such scoundrels, so determined to fight it out. Only an Englishman or an American would have been so foolhardy.

The brigands gave a sharp and sudden cry, and then came scrambling up the path, hoping to take Lord Norman by surprise. He was ready for them, however, and then his pistol rang out, doing deadly, telling work. There

was a heavy thud and the sound of retreating feet down the mountain.

Lord Norman was getting excited. There came a wild, cruel look into his steady, clear, grey eyes, and the lips were tightly clenched together. He looked upon the killing of the brigands as so much vermin got rid of. There was no compassion in his face when he heard the death-cry that had just escaped the man he had shot.

All became so still that at length Lord Norman grew impatient, and incautiously put his head out of the shelter of the rock. The brigands were evidently watching out sharply, for a bullet whizzed very near his head—too near, in fact, to be pleasant.

"A narrow escape!" muttered Lord Norman.

Lord Norman was fairly convinced that he would never leave the spot alive, but congratulated himself that he had killed two of the brigands.

How long Lord Norman would have held out we cannot tell, but after firing another shot he made the discovery that he had no more bullets left. He had never contemplated meeting with brigands.

When the brigands made another attack upon him he made an attempt to defend himself with the stick he carried, but received a stunning blow from the butt-end of a gun, which laid him low.

The brigands did not find much money upon him, but they felt sure of a handsome ransom, and carried Lord Norman off to a place of security.

That same evening the ladies were waiting anxiously for Lord Norman's return, when a villainous-looking head appeared at the window, and a piece of paper was handed to Lady Norman.

"Lord Norman has been captured by brigands!" said Lady Norman, white with terror. "He will be killed!"

"Lord Norman is in no great danger," said Iola, quite coolly.

"No great danger?" repeated Lady Norman. "How can you say such a thing, you ungrateful girl? You don't seem to care a bit, although my son has been so very kind to you."

As for Rose she began sobbing and crying, and appeared quite inconsolable. It was a well got-up piece of acting, and Iola saw through it at once.

"If you'll let me explain matters, you'll see that I am not ungrateful!" said Iola. "All these brigands want is a heavy ransom, so you see it is to their interest to take care of Lord Norman. We must go back to Rome as quickly as we can."

Seeing how she had wronged Iola Lady Norman first apologised to her and then took her advice.

Half-an-hour after the visit of the brigand Lady Norman and her companion started for Rome.

A very short time elapsed, and then the money was sent to the brigands, and, of course, Lord Norman was released at once, and started there and then to join his mother.

It so happened that Lord Norman had to pass through towns in which the cholera was raging, and he was struck down at once.

At first, Lady Norman was surprised at his prolonged absence, then became uneasy, then finally alarmed. Evidently something serious had occurred to delay him in this way.

"I believe that Lord Norman has been taken ill in one of those unhealthy towns," said Iola.

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Rose, beginning to cry. "Of course, we can't venture back into one of those cholera-infected towns. That is out of the question."

"Why can't we go back?" asked Iola.

"Because—because," stammered Rose, "it would be dangerous to do so, and at the risk of our lives."

"Then you think that we ought to desert Lord Norman?" said Iola, hardly able to hide her contempt for Rose Dudley.

Rose hardly knew what reply to make, but said, after a pause,—

"I have a horror of cholera, and dare not face it."

"I have a horror of it too," said Iola, gravely, "but would gladly risk death for any one I loved."

Rose, the good and charitable lady who had done so much for the poor in London at no risk to herself, had no idea of risking her life for the sake of the man she loved. It was more than could be expected of her, and she thought that Iola was talking quite unreasonably.

"I think you talk Quixotically," said Rose. "You may depend upon it Lord Norman will pull through all right; he has a wonderful strong constitution."

"He is in a very weak state of health just now," observed Iola, who looked very pale and anxious; "and if he is left with strangers I don't know what will become of him."

"He has money," said Rose, "and will be sure to be treated well. Don't make the worst of things, if you please!"

"In such a time as this money will be of very little good," said Iola. "People are flying in a panic from infected neighbourhoods, and there are many thieves who are taking advantage of the state of affairs. There are riots in the streets, and even the doctors are attacked by the frantic people. The state of things is truly terrible!"

"And you wish me to go amongst scenes like these?" said Rose, indignantly.

Lady Norman was listening intently to the conversation of the two girls, and saw for the first time that Iola was the more sensible and the better-hearted.

"No, I will go!" said Iola, rising from her chair. "I owe Lord Norman a debt of gratitude which I will now try to repay."

"Yes," said Lady Norman and Rose, in a breath.

"Yes," said the brave and energetic girl. "I'll start at once. Lord Norman may be in need of help even at this moment."

Rose gave Iola a glance of rage, but it was lost upon the devoted girl, who had no desire at that moment to quarrel. There was only room for one feeling in her heart, and that was that Lord Norman was in supreme danger. She could think of nothing else. Lady Norman quite began to love Iola, and now saw how she had misjudged her. The girl was worth her weight in gold. Who could compare her with the cunning-shallow-hearted woman, Rose?

It is only in supreme and critical situations that we can find out people's real natures. It is when the storm comes on, in the great difficulties of life, that we find out the true-hearted.

For the moment Iola seemed older than her years. Lady Norman listened, and was guided by her. As for Rose, she could only look on and say nothing.

Iola knew that she had a most difficult task before her, for she did not know where Lord Norman was, and would have to search for him.

Some people would have said that the girl was mad to start upon such a hopeless journey, but at all events there was method in her madness. Her dignified calmness, her wonderful will-power and resolution put confidence in Lady Norman's heart.

Lord Norman's valet was to accompany Iola. A fine, faithful fellow he was, who had been in Lord Norman's employment for some years, and who was regarded almost as a friend.

The valet was astonished when Iola's project was told to him, but he promised to take care of the girl, and Lady Norman knew him of old.

At an early hour on the following morning Iola and the faithful fellow started on their dangerous errand of mercy. Both had made up their minds to do what they had promised.

Lady Norman took Iola and kissed her again and again. She tried to speak, but her voice failed her, and she could only burst into tears.

Rose shrank into a dark corner, feeling a little bit ashamed of herself.

She hated Iola more than ever for her heroism, and her only hope was that she would not meet with Lord Norman.

Rose would have liked Lord Norman to have died rather than be saved by Iola. It seemed to Rose that Iola was playing a desperate game for the sake of winning his money.

It is so natural for mean people to judge other people's motives by their own. Rose could not believe that it was pure love that made Iola go to the assistance of Lord Norman.

Lady Norman did nothing but praise Iola, and this drove Rose very nearly frantic.

"Why will she speak to me of her?" she cried, when alone. "I am sick of her very name. I hope to Heaven that she will catch the cholera and die, and that Lord Norman will return well and hearty. It seems to me that Iola is running a great risk. When so many are dying perhaps Heaven will take her."

## CHAPTER V.

IOLA had never imagined anything so dreadful as the scenes she witnessed while searching for Lord Norman. The people in the towns she visited were perfectly panic-stricken, and those who had the means were hurrying away from the infected districts.

It was clear that Iola was considered mad in coming to a place that every one was leaving in such wild haste.

Men and women came and spoke to her and urged her to turn back, but she would not listen to them, even when she was told that she was going to certain death. Her coolness struck the excitable, panic-stricken people with amazement.

There were even riots in some towns, and the soldiery had to be called out to restore order. Poverty and death seemed to walk hand-in-hand, and the dirt and the squalor was something appalling.

At length, Lord Norman's valet grew frightened, and tried to persuade Iola to return to Rome; but she would not take his advice. He could leave her if he liked, she told him, but she must go on.

Her devotion hushed the valet, and he resolved to stay with Iola, whatever came of it. He could not be less courageous than a woman. Shame made him remain while fear urged him to retreat.

It was wearying work searching for Lord Norman, and sometimes Iola was discouraged by the hopelessness of the task, but she never once gave up.

Perhaps if Iola had had no object in view she would have been attacked by the disease; but having no time to think of her danger she kept wonderful health.

Iola made inquiries in a systematic way, and the valet was astonished at the girl's strength of will. Iola was even surprised at herself; but she began to feel timidly anxious. Would she find Lord Norman only to be too late? This was the question she often asked herself.

She was never at rest, and her companion was afraid that she would bring on illness by her over activity. The heat was almost stifling, and the ground parched for want of rain.

Just when Iola had almost given up all hope of finding Lord Norman she discovered him in a small hotel, where he was lying in a dangerous state. All the waiters had left the hotel, and only the landlord and the landlady remained. They had just decided to send Lord Norman to the overcrowded hospital, when Iola appeared.

It was almost certain death to be taken there, for the doctors and nurses had a great deal too much to do; besides, the horror of such surroundings often produced fatal results.

Iola would not hear of his removal, and undertook to nurse him through his illness, with the assistance of the valet.

It would be tedious to describe Iola's anxiety

and Lord Norman's sufferings, so we will not attempt to do so. Lord Norman was not suffering from cholera, but from a fever brought on through the privations he had suffered while in the hands of the brigands. The blow he had received from the butt of the gun had been a severe one, and for a time had affected his brain, so that he did not even recognise Iola.

It is sad to watch beside the bedside of one we love and not to be recognised. It made Iola's heart ache to see the unmeaning glances that Lord Norman cast round the room.

The doctor told Iola that Lord Norman's senses would return to him in time if he were taken care of. It was strange to Iola to find Lord Norman, who had always been so strong of will, now obeying her like a child. He seemed to have no will of his own, and to be quite helpless without her. The smallest thing would attract his attention, but he seemed to have no recollection of the past.

As soon as possible Iola took Lord Norman away from the hotel where he had first been taken ill. They travelled very slowly, but at length reached Rome, where Lady Norman and Rose were awaiting their arrival.

Lady Norman was shocked at the change that had come over her son, but she was none the less grateful to Iola. She had saved his life at the peril of her own. She thanked Iola over and over again, and Iola felt sufficiently rewarded for all the trouble she had taken.

Rose behaved in the most ungracious manner, never once expressing a grateful word for all the danger Iola had undergone. Her conduct to Iola was almost unladylike and quite offensive; but the girl did not care for this. Her heart had only room for one joyous feeling, for she had saved Lord Norman's life. She did not care whether he ever heard of her kindness or not.

Now that there was no danger to be apprehended from nursing Lord Norman Rose came forward, and Iola was not allowed to go near him. Lady Norman was quite disgusted at Rose's treatment of Iola, but as she was engaged to her son she did not like to say anything. She knew, too, that Iola would not like her to do so.

Rose was greatly annoyed at the way Lady Norman petted Iola. It was clear to Rose that Lady Norman liked Iola better than her. Her ladyship now regretted having persuaded Lord Norman to marry Rose, for she saw that Iola would make the better wife of the two. However, her foolish mistake could not be rectified now, and her son must marry Rose if he came back to his senses. Rose had not shown much anxiety during the time in which Iola had been in search of Lord Norman.

Her total want of feeling had made Lady Norman take a dislike to her. During the few weeks of uncertainty in regard to Lord Norman's fate Rose had been in the best of spirits, and had gone about amusing herself in the most heedless way. Lady Norman now regretted having brought about the engagement. It seemed to her she had done her son a great wrong.

Lord Norman was taken back to England to his home in the country in hopes that familiar scenes and familiar faces would arouse him from the strange apathy into which he had fallen. It seems so much more sad for a man of brilliant intellect to lose his senses than a person who has no great capacity.

It brought tears into Iola's eyes to see him thus, and she often wondered to herself if he would ever be the same again. It seemed impossible to Iola that Lord Norman would ever regain his senses.

Rose was anxious too that Lord Norman should have his senses again, for she wished to marry him and enjoy his money. There never could have been a more selfish woman than Rose, who seemed to think that the world was made on purpose for her.

At length, there was a change for the better

in Lord Norman—so at least the doctor declared, although no one else could see it; but a few days after the doctor made the announcement everyone saw the change in Lord Norman.

When Rose saw that Lord Norman would soon be himself again she took good care to always be with him, in order that he should believe her to be a true and devoted woman.

Her great fear was lest he should be told of Iola's patient search for him in those unhealthy Italian towns. She knew Lord Norman's nature well enough to guess how grateful he would be to Iola for the service she had rendered him. There was one thing that afforded Iola satisfaction. The doctor had strictly forbade anyone, in the event of Lord Norman coming to himself, to mention anything in connection with his illness.

It pained Iola very much to be kept away from Lord Norman. When there had been danger she had been allowed to serve him, now there was no danger she was kept right away from him.

When Lord Norman came to himself the first person he saw was Rose, who was at needlework near the window. Acting up to the instructions the doctor had given her, Rose manifested no surprise at the favourable change that had come over Lord Norman.

He looked round the room with a bewildered, puzzled expression, evidently unable to make out the matter at all. He felt that there was a strange blank in his life, and tried hopelessly to think of all that had happened, but in vain.

The last time he remembered anything he had been in Italy. Now he was in England, in his own country mansion.

Rose saw the struggle that was going on in Lord Norman's breast, but thought it wise to pretend not to do so.

Most men, placed in Lord Norman's position, would have asked for some explanation, but he did nothing of the kind. He kept very quiet, and made every endeavour to fill up the gap in his life, but was still unsuccessful. It was a sad spectacle to see him trying to recall all that had happened.

Lord Norman saw at once that something was wrong with him, but he decided to conceal this fact from everyone. No one should know that he had anything doubtful on his mind, so he waited for Rose to speak.

"Are you better?" asked Rose, in the softest voice she could assume.

"Much better, thanks," answered Lord Norman, keeping to his resolution of hiding his loss of memory from everyone.

"Oh, I am so glad to hear that!" said Rose, taking his hand in hers in impulsive delight; "for you have been so dreadfully ill, and have frightened us all. I mean," she added, "Lady Norman and myself."

"It is strange how weak I have grown," cried Lord Norman; looking at his thin, white hands. "So you have been my kind, attentive nurse, Rose?"

"I have done all in my power to help you," said Rose, after a moment's hesitation, "and so has Lady Norman."

Never a word of Iola's devotion to Lord Norman. Rose ran the risk of telling a falsehood in order that Lord Norman should not know of the service Iola had rendered him.

Rose knew very well that he would never forgive her if he found out her great deceit. The only thing was to get married as quickly as possible. When they were man and wife nothing could be altered.

"You don't know how grateful I am to you," said Lord Norman; but, although she had told him of the service she had rendered him, he was still far from loving her. He even felt angry with himself for the lack of warmth in his voice, and was afraid that she might notice it.

Lord Norman looked at her keenly, and, being an observant man, saw that she was in perfect health, and did not look like a woman who had been closely shut in a sick room. Her



face had a healthy colour in it, and there was scarcely a trace of anxiety about her.

"We had a great deal of trouble getting you back from Italy," observed Rose; "but we thought you would like to be brought to your own home, and the doctors advised it."

Lord Norman had never been ill before in his life, and the allusions to his weakness irritated him. It seemed to him as though she talked to him as if he were a child.

To a man of Lord Norman's active mind and restless disposition, inactivity was simply torture. He could not understand being ill, and it was as much as he could do to stifle an impetuous exclamation.

"I wonder you took so much trouble," he said, rather sarcastically. "I assure you, Rose, that I am not worth it."

"How can you say such a thing?" cried Rose, in reproachful tones. "All the assistance I have rendered you has been a pleasure to me. I am sufficiently rewarded to see that you are growing stronger."

"Stronger!" cried Lord Norman, sitting up on the sofa. "Why, I feel as weak as a man can possibly be. It strikes me forcibly, Rose, that the cemetery is the proper place for me."

Rose put her hands before her face, and, to all appearances, had burst into tears. This made Lord Norman feel uncomfortable, and he scarcely knew what to say, so he was greatly relieved when his mother entered the room, for it relieved him from an awkward position.

"Norman is better," cried Rose, glancing up at Lady Norman, and the look of joy that came into Lady Norman's face is impossible to describe. It made her appear quite ten years younger just for a moment.

"I hope she will not say a word about that wretched Iola," thought Rose. "If she tells him of her search for him in Italy I am ruined."

She regretted now having concealed the service Iola had rendered him from Lord Norman, for she knew the light in which he would regard such a deliberate lie.

Lord Norman was such a truthful man himself that he expected truth in others, and Rose was frightened that he would find out her deceit.

"This is good news, indeed!" cried Lady Norman, and having the genuine ring of gladness in her voice; her son looked up with an affectionate glance.

Lady Norman was more tender and loving than she had ever been before. Since Lord Norman had been ill Lady Norman had been thinking over matters, and came to the conclusion that she had not been so kind to him as she ought to have been.

"Rose has been telling me of all the trouble I have been," said Lord Norman. "I am sure I am very grateful to her for her great kindness. It is very tedious watching by a sick bed night and day."

Lady Norman gave Rose a sharp, penetrating glance, that brought the colour into the woman's face. She understood the meaning of that glance only too well, and it was no wonder that the flush of shame had come upon her. Lady Norman plainly meant, "I see you have not mentioned Iola's self-sacrifice."

"I am afraid you exaggerate Rose's services," said Lady Norman, and she would have told Lord Norman of Iola's search for him in Italy, but for the doctor's warning that no allusion was to be made of things that had occurred during his illness.

So delighted was Iola when she heard of Lord Norman's recovery that she made a rush for the room, but Rose placed a detaining hand on her arm.

"I don't think you had better see him now, dear," said Rose, who had a catlike gleam in her eyes. "The doctor says that he ought to be perfectly quiet. The least excitement might throw him back."

It was with the greatest difficulty that Iola could keep back her tears. It seemed very

hard that she, who had saved Lord Norman's life, should be denied the pleasure of seeing him now that he was getting well. She had had all the anxiety, and now Rose stepped in and took the credit of everything. Can it be wondered at that Iola hated her?

Some women would have insisted upon seeing Lord Norman, but Iola was too proud to do that. She merely said,—

"I should be sorry to disturb Lord Norman, but will you tell him how pleased I am to hear of his recovery."

Of course Rose did not give Iola's message or Lord Norman's message, or he would have asked to see her at once. As it was, he was quite hurt at her apparent indifference, and never mentioned her name.

Iola made up her mind that she would never go near Lord Norman if she could help it. When she saw him in the garden leaning on Rose's arm she slipped away to her own room, and would watch him from the window.

Day by day Lord Norman grew stronger, and at last could dispense with Rose's assistance. This pleased him very much, for he did not like being dependent on anyone.

One evening he was taking a stroll all by himself when he came upon Iola.

She was reading, and was in ignorance of his approach, or she would have run away. As it was, he was standing near her when she looked up.

"It is a long time since I have seen you, Iola," he said, as Iola rose to her feet in the utmost confusion.

It seemed to Lord Norman that the girl was almost frightened of him, and this pained him considerably. It seemed more like fear than indifference. Seeing that she made no attempt to speak, he continued,—

"And I don't think I should have seen you now had I not caught you by surprise. You are not looking so well as you did, Iola?"

If he had known all she had gone through for his sake—the sleepless nights and keen anxiety—he would have understood the reason of her pale face. Most women would have told him of the services rendered in hopes of winning gratitude and love, but Iola was not a girl to parade her great deeds before the world. She left such women as Rose to do that.

"I have shared the general anxiety about you," cried Iola.

"And yet you have not taken the trouble to come and see me?" said Lord Norman, in reproachful tones.

"Rose told me that you must not be disturbed," said Iola—she was obliged to say this in self-defence—"or I should have come on hearing of your recovery."

"Rose ought to have known that I should have been only too glad to see you!" said Lord Norman. "The sight of your face has done me a world of good already!"

Iola flushed with pleasure as Lord Norman took her hand and pressed it warmly.

"Will you keep a secret if I confide in you?" almost whispered Lord Norman, as they sat side by side in the arbour; and not waiting for her to answer, he went on: "Do you know that I feel very ungrateful at times; but, notwithstanding Rose's kindness to me in nursing me through my illness, I like her less and less every day! Hark, Iola! here she comes!"

When Rose saw Iola and Lord Norman together she could scarcely conceal the look of anger that came over her face.

What if Iola had told Lord Norman of all that had occurred in Italy? How long had they been together? she wondered.

One glance at Lord Norman's face told her that Iola had refrained from speaking of the service she had rendered him, and from that moment Rose regarded her rival as an idiot.

"A charming night!" said Rose; "but the wind is rather cold. Don't you think that you will catch cold, Norman?"

"I think there is more chance of Iola catching cold than I," said Lord Norman, "for I have on my greatcoat."

All three went into the house together.

After that evening Iola and Lord Norman met frequently at meal times. Lord Norman noticed with surprise that no allusion was ever made to Italy.

There was one person in the house who did not approve of the way affairs were going on at all. This individual was Lord Norman's valet.

He had been with Iola during her search for Lord Norman, and had come to the conclusion that she loved his master, and it was his desire that she should marry him. As for that "sleek-faced cat," as he very disrespectfully called Rose, he hated her!

After thinking over the matter he came to the conclusion that Lord Norman ought to be told of the service Iola had rendered him.

"If no one else will tell him I'll do it," he thought, "even if I risk losing my situation!"

No sooner had the valet come to this resolve when he hastened to carry it out. Of course, he had many opportunities of speaking to Lord Norman.

"Some women are like angels, my lord!" said the valet; "and had it not been for one of them you would not be alive now! When I think of the care that young lady took of you it brings tears into my eyes, that it does!"

"How devoted Rose has been to me!" thought Lord Norman, with a feeling of shame at his heart; "and yet I am unmanly enough to feel no gratitude!"

"Miss Rose Dudley was very good to me!" said Lord Norman.

"Miss Rose Dudley!" cried the valet, excitedly; "I am not talking about Miss Rose Dudley!" Then, "I am speaking of Miss Day! It was she who, when we heard nothing of you after you had been released by the brigands, went in search of you, hunted for you from town to town where the cholera was raging, and people were dying like rotten sheep! It was she who found you at last, and nearly at death's door, and nursed you back to life! I never saw such devotion in my life, my lord; and I think it is right that you should know all about it!"

"You are right," said Lord Norman, after quite a minute, for what he had been just told took him quite by surprise.

He felt now that he hated Rose. Her meanness was simply despicable, and her audacity more than surprising. She had been so ready to take credit for an act she had not done, while Iola had concealed the service she had rendered. The two women were as different to each other as light and darkness!

"I am glad you think so, my lord!" said the valet. "I was afraid you would think I was taking a liberty; but I could not bear that Miss Iola should get no credit for what she had done!"

Lord Norman had become very excited—more excited than the valet had ever seen him before. He could hardly wait to allow the valet to complete his dress.

The first thing he did on being released from the hands of his valet was to go in search of Iola.

He met Rose on the stairs, but hurried by, scarcely stopping to say a word. If he had remained a moment longer in her presence he knew he would give vent to his anger at her deceit.

"How very energetic Lord Norman looks this morning!" said Rose to Lady Norman. "He has not been so active since his illness!" Then Rose thought to herself, "his wedding will take place shortly, and I shall enjoy his great wealth."

Lord Norman found Iola in the library poring over an Italian grammar. Since she had been to Italy she had taken a fancy to learn that language, and was getting on very well. She found study the best thing to make her forget her love for Lord Norman.

"Iola!" he cried, as he looked up, "I have come to thank you!"

"For what?" asked Iola.  
 "For your kindness and your devotion to me!" said Lord Norman. "I have heard all about your brave, good deeds in Italy, and I should be less than a man if I did not come to tell you how grateful I am. I am afraid, Iola, that you have been really misjudged, for you are the best-hearted girl in the great, wide world. You dear, good girl—you angel upon earth."

He took her little hands in his, and gazed into her beautiful soft eyes as he spoke. There was an expression on his face that startled Iola. No woman could fail to understand that glance. It meant plainly "I love you."

"It was my duty to look after you!" said Iola, using his favourite word.

"But it is not every one who do their duty in this wicked world!" said Lord Norman. Then, before she could make any resistance, he took her into his arms, and kissed her again and again, until Iola suddenly remembered his engagement to Rose.

It was at this moment that Rose entered the room, and gazed at Lord Norman and Iola with surprise and rage. She saw clearly that she was found out, that Lord Norman had discovered her deceit, and despised her for it.

"I am sorry to have disturbed you, my lord!" said Rose Dudley, and then gently shut the door, leaving Lord Norman and Iola together.

Lord Norman was glad that Rose had found him kissing Iola, since it had saved him the trouble of breaking off their engagement.

"Oh, Lord Norman! what will Lady Norman say when she hears that I have consented to be your wife?" cried Iola.

"Let's go and see!" said Lord Norman, with a bright, happy laugh; and there was a brighter look on his face than Iola had ever seen there before.

Seeing how frightened Iola looked, bearded, encouragingly, "I am sure my mother will be glad to hear that we are to marry."

They came into the drawing-room hand-in-hand, and she saw Lord Norman's happy face, and heard his explanation. She took Iola in her arms and kissed her, saying—

"You will make Norman a better wife than anyone else. Since you have saved his life he must devote it to you."

[THE END.]

## FACTS.

THE cream of ta-ta is the good bye-kiss.  
 IN the human race the butcher holds the steaks.

WORKING like a horse—a lawyer drawing a conveyance.

THE best way to get at the tongue of a bell is to peal it.

A MAN makes his maiden speech when he asks a young girl to marry him.

TAKEN as a whole the Indians, although illiterate, are the best red race in the world.

THERE'S nothing like leather, excepting, of course, the upper crust of the young wife's first pie.

IN Denmark girls are trained to agriculture, but in this country they take more kindly to husbandry.

RICH CHINAMEN go to Tartary for their wives, their wealth enabling them to secure the very cream of Tartary.

IT hurts a man just about as much to burn him in effigy as to have his shadow on a stone wall butted by a goat.

MISTRESS: "Jane, Willie informs me that my husband kissed you yesterday." Jane: "Oh, that's all right, ma'am—I've got used to it now."

PATRON: "Waiter, how's this?" "How's what?" "I found that cigar-holder in the soup." "Well! well! I'm glad of that, I've been hunting for the hanged thing an hour."

THE street-car of the future may be run after more scientific principles; but the street-car of the passed is run after most eagerly now.

HE: "What would you say, dear, if I should say that you were a harp of a thousand strings?" SHE: "I should think, love, that you were a lyre."

A DOUBLE-MEANING EXPRESSION.—Mrs. Jones: "Don't trouble to see me to the door, Mrs. Smith." Mrs. Smith: "No trouble; quite a pleasure, I assure you."

A COUNTRY horse-fancier's daughter, Betsy by name, having reached a marriageable age, her father wrote familiarly to an old friend, "Bets offered, but no takers as yet."

"WHEN lovely woman buys a polly,  
 Which she designs shall talk and pray,  
 How shocked is she, and melancholy,  
 To find the parrot wears all day."

ITS LEAVING TIME.—Patient Old Lady (to elevator boy, reading novel): "How often does the elevator go up, boy?" Elevator Boy: "It goes up at the end of every chapter, ma'am."

PROOF OF LOVE.—"I tell you, Susie, that I will commit suicide if you won't have me." "Well, Thomas, as soon as you have given me that proof of your affection I will believe that you love me."

MOTHER: "Tommy, ain't you ashamed of yourself to strike your little sister? You ought to know better." Tommy: "Yes, ma, I do; but we're playing school, and I'm the teacher. It's all right."

A LIBERAL INDUCEMENT.—Young Man (to jeweller): "Will the watch cost anything extra if I should want a little time on it?" Jeweller: "No, sir; you pay me two guineas for the watch, and I'll throw the time in."

A FARMER in the West Riding declares that he saw a ghost eating green apples in his orchard the other night. Now, if we hear of a case of cholera in phantom in the West Riding we shall know what caused it.

CONSOLATION FOR A YOUNG MOTHER.—Young Mother (to elderly lady visitor): "Don't you think the baby looks very much like his father?" Old Lady: "Yes, I do; but I wouldn't worry—he may outgrow it."

HE'S THE YOUNG MAN.—Tubbsley (bashfully, and removing his hat spasmodically): "Is Miss Tremmer in?" Maid: "She is, but she's engaged." Tubbsley (who settled things last night): "I know it; I'm the young man."

"LONGEVITY? I should say longevity did run in the family," said Mrs. Spriggins. "Why, John was six foot two, Bill was six foot four, and George he had more longevity than any man I ever see. He was six foot seven if he was a foot."

UNJUST SUSPICIONS.—"Robert," said his wife suspiciously, "where have you been? You're late to dinner." "I've been assisting, in a humble way, my dear, towards improving the breed of horses." "Oh, I was afraid you were at the races."

A PRETTY maiden fell overboard on the Thames the other day, and her lover leaned over the side of the boat, as she rose to the surface, and said "Give me your hand." "Please ask papa," she said, as she sank for the second time.

A CHANCE FOR A LITTLE BROTHER.—Small Brother: "Where did you get that cake, Annie?" Small Sister: "Mother gave it to me." Small Brother: "Ah, she always gives you more than me." Small Sister: "Never mind; she's going to put mustard plasters on us when we go to bed to-night, and I'll ask her to let you have the biggest."

REGRETTING THE ENGAGEMENT.—Emma (to her fiancé): "Just think, Edgar, that rich old man, Dr. James, who knows nothing of our engagement, asked me this morning to be his wife." Edgar: "What answer did you give him?" Emma: "I told him I regretted exceedingly that I was previously engaged." (A sudden coolness between the lovers.)

A GENIUS who knows one of the church's needs has invented a contribution-box that rings a bell every time a brace button is dropped in. This will sadly curtail some men's charity account, but the church won't lose anything by it.

A YOUNG artist who lives in a boarding-house wants to know how he can learn to play the violin without disturbing the other boarders. Soap your bow, young man, and bathe the strings twice a day in sweet oil. They won't complain much then.

AFTER EXAMINING THE WRITING.—Old Lady (to village postmistress): "Hav you got any thin' for me, Miss Bullard?" Postmistress: "Here's a card from your daughter, Mandy. How she do improve in spellin' sence she's ben gain' to that boardin'-school."

A QUESTION IN RELATIONSHIP.—Grandpa: "Well, Fred, you're an uncle now; you ought to be real proud over it." Little Fred: "No, I oughtn't to. I ain't no uncle." Grandpa: "Why not?" Little Fred: "Cause I'm an aunt. The new baby's a girl."

"AND so your sister really said last night that she thought I was a little daisy; did she, Bobby?" asked Featherly, striving to hide his exultation. "Yes," responded Bobby, "and pa said that he shouldn't be surprised, as he had often seen you a little daisy himself."

QUALIFIED FOR THE CHOIR.—Minister: "Your daughter is very handsome, Mr. Snapper." Snapper: "Yes, she is. I'm thinking of having her join the church choir." Minister: "That's good. Is she a fine vocalist?" Snapper: "She can't sing at all, but she's got a devil of a temper."

CAUGHT ON SUNDAY.—"These fish, my dear Mrs. Hendricks," remarked the minister, who was discussing a Sunday dinner with the family, "are deliciously fresh. I am enjoying them very much." "They ought to be fresh," volunteered Bobby, who was also enjoying them; "pa caught 'em only this morning!"

"I NEVER can be more than a sister to you," said a buxom widow, tenderly, to an old bachelor who had proposed. "Ah, madam, yes, you can," he responded gallantly. "I am not a man to lose hope." "Yes, but I cannot, she persisted. "But," he said, "you have daughters! you may yet be my mother-in-law."

AN INDIGNANT MOTHER.—A somewhat unpolished mother of a very charming daughter was recently heard to say: "I don't intermeddle in' Emily go back to Madame Waring's school. They don't teach 'em right. Now, I don't know so very much myself, but I never would tell my child that IX spells nine. It's absolutely ridiculous."

A DISAPPOINTED UNDERTAKER.—Citizen (to undertaker): "I thought, Mr. Mould, that you were going off on a vacation?" Undertaker: "I did intend to start over a month ago, but old Mrs. Bentley was taken dangerously ill, and I've been sort of hanging on, and," (in a low, injured tone of voice): "I'll be blamed, sir, if she ain't getting better."

A MISUNDERSTANDING.—Indignant Citizen: "When I bought this horse you told me that with a little training he would make a first-class animal for the track." Horse Dealer: "And so he will." Citizen: "I tried him yesterday, and he was seventeen minutes trotting a mile." Horse Dealer: "Oh, I didn't mean a race-track, friend. I meant a street-car track."

UNNECESSARY WORRY.—It was getting late when the girl said, shyly: "You look worried about something, Mr. Harkinton." "I am," he replied. "I have in my pocket a £10,000 package of government bonds, which I foolishly forgot to deposit to-day, and—aside from that I—I love you so devotedly, Miss Sohermerhorn, I am afraid to learn my fate." "As for the bonds, Mr. Harkinton," replied the girl, with a business air, "papa has a safe in the house; and regarding the other matter, why—why, I think so many of us are apt to borrow trouble, Mr. Harkinton."



## SOCIETY.

On November 5th Princess Louise was to go to Newcastle, where she was to formally inaugurate the new College of Physical Science. Her Royal Highness subsequently presented the prizes to the successful students of the High School for Girls at Gateshead, and on the next day paid a visit to Lord and Lady Armstrong at Cragside, Rothbury.

The death of Count Robilant, the Italian Ambassador, was exceedingly sudden, so much so, that it was not until late on the Tuesday night that the Countess was aware that her husband's life was in danger, and his death followed shortly afterwards. His arrival in this country was too recent for him yet to have made any decided impression on English society in general. In consequence of the Count's death, Chevalier Catalani, the principal Secretary, once more becomes *Chargé d'Affaires*, and has been obliged to cut short his holiday and return hastily to England; so one result of the death will be to place Chevalier and Madame Catalani at the head of the Embassy, a post which they already occupied with general satisfaction. Madame Catalani is handsome and accomplished, and her taste in dress is a proverb. One of her drawing-room dresses of this year will long be remembered as a dream of beauty, the decorations consisting of wreaths and trails of pink roses so plentifully bestowed that at first sight she might have been mistaken for the goddess of roses visible on earth.

A CORRESPONDENT of *Modern Society* describing the late festivities at Rome on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor of Germany says: "Next followed King Humbert, on whose arm rested the hand of Princess Letitia Bonaparte. Marriage seems to have agreed with the young bride of the Duke d'Aosta. She has lost the frightened, scared air which was so noticeable at her wedding, and even if not reconciled to her lot, appears determined to make the best of it. She was certainly the most *distinguee*-looking of the many high-bred women present. Tall, stately, dignified, walking as if she were 'monarch of all she surveyed,' complexion perfect, shoulders snowy white, dark diamond-decked tresses—looked the very personification of grace and beauty, her appearance causing a hum of admiration which could not be suppressed. Amadeo himself came next, having for his partner the Princess Isabella of Bavaria, wife of Prince Thomas of Savoy, brother to Queen Margaret."

The ex-King of Spain has shaved off his beard, and the alteration is hardly an improvement. He seems to have "toned down" since his marriage, and it is no secret that the weeping, reluctant girl who stood by his side at the altar, hoping against hope that at the last moment some unforeseen event might save her from the union she detested, has already asserted herself.

The Hesse magnates are singularly prone to misfortune, it seems; previous to the untimely deaths by diphtheria of our own Princess Alice and her child, a son of the Hesse family had perished by falling out of a window at the Grand Ducal Palace, and now news comes of the calamitous end of the Landgrave Frederick William at sea. This Prince was voyaging from Batavia to Singapore, and, being somewhat light-headed, jumped overboard and was drowned. He was only thirty-four years of age.

By THE BYE, it is not generally known that the present German Emperor is a keen sportsman, though he is rather severely handicapped by his useless left arm. He shoots with light guns, made on purpose for him, which he aims like pistols, and at the short distance which they carry he is a very fair shot.

## STATISTICS.

According to a good authority, the world consumes annually 650,000 tons of coffee.

There are said to be a million persons now studying Volapuk (the universal language).

The daily consumption of needles in the United States is said to be 4,200,000, most of which comes from Redditch.

The Red Indians cultivated 227,265 acres of land last year. They own over 1,000,000 sheep, 40,471 swine, 111,407 cattle, and 358,334 horses and mules.

The candle power of the moon has been estimated at 134,000,000,000,000,000. This is not far from the number of candles, each one-half an inch in diameter, that could stand side by side on one-half the surface of the moon.

During the seven months which ended July 31 the total number of emigrants who went to the United States was 357,125. Of these 113,000 were from Great Britain, 67,000 from Germany, 11,000 from Bohemia and Hungary, 25,000 from Russia, 59,000 from Sweden and Norway, 38,000 from Italy, 3,000 from France, 6,000 from Denmark, and 4,000 from Poland.

## GEMS.

BETTER three hours too soon than one minute too late.

LIFE is a long course of mutual education which ends but with the grave.

IN doing good to others there is an enjoyment of which the sordid, selfish man knows nothing.

To endeavour to work upon the vulgar with fine sense is like attempting to hew blocks with a razor.

PIETY and virtue are not only delightful for the present, but they leave peace and contentment behind them.

IT is manifest that all government of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge best by gathering many knowledges, which is reading.

CONTENTMENT is a pearl of great price, and whoever procures it at the expense of ten thousand desires makes a wise and a happy purchase.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SCALLOPED CHICKEN.—Take equal parts of cold chicken, boiled rice or macaroni, and tomato sauce. Put in layers in a shallow dish, and cover with buttered crumb. Bake till brown. Cold roast turkey, using stuffing and gravy, may be prepared in the same way.

POTTED HAM.—Take one-half pound of lean ham, one-half pound of fresh butter, a pinch of ground nutmeg, a little cayenne pepper, and a pinch of white pepper. Pound the ham smooth in a mortar, and the pepper and nutmeg, rubbing them well into the ham, then add the butter, rubbing them well together. Next place in the jar and run melted butter over the top, and seal.

BATTER PUDDING.—Take two eggs, two table-spoonfuls of flour, one of butter, and a breakfastful of milk. Beat the butter to a cream; beat the eggs, add a little white sugar, and, for a change, the grated rind of a lemon; put in the flour and milk, and beat all together. Pour the mixture into a buttered shallow dish, and bake twenty minutes in a sharp oven. It may also be baked in common saucers instead of a dish, when the puddings should be doubled up when turned out, so as to form semicircles on the dish, and sifted sugar strewn over them.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

CURIOUS CUSTOM.—There is a peculiarity which Vienna shares in common with all Austrian towns. At ten o'clock the streets are deserted. Scarcely will you meet one solitary soul. A law authorizes the portière or concierge to levy a tax of ten kreutzers, called the *Spergeld*, on any person leaving or entering the house after that hour. Thus this *Spergeld* obliges you, when you are invited to a party, to pay ten kreutzers on leaving your own apartment, ten more for yourself and your servant on entering your host's house, the same when you leave it, and the same on re-entering your own. This *Spergeld* gives rise to some curious fashions. Thus the theatre and opera begin early, and the performance is timed to end at a quarter before ten. If it lasts longer nearly the whole audience rises and hastens away to be home in time to save the *Spergeld*. Cafés are emptied at that hour, the trains are crowded as the last moment of grace arrives, and even the rubbers of whist at the clubs are interrupted. It grows into such a force of habit, and is such an accepted fact, that, except under exceptional circumstances, you do not think of incurring the debt.

SAVE BY KEEPING ACCOUNTS.—If all men, whether engaged in business or acting as employers and receiving salaries of daily wages would keep a regular account with themselves, in which should appear in detail all the money they receive and all they expend, they would live more wisely, and, as a rule, far more successfully. Here, for example, is a man who is in receipt of a salary. This salary he receives in twelve monthly payment. Let us suppose him to keep an account with himself. When he receives a monthly payment he charges himself as debtor to that amount, and during the month he credits himself with all he pays out, item by item. At the end of the month he settles this account with himself, and sees on paper just where his money came from and just where it has gone. If he has spent less than he has received he carries the surplus forward to the next month, and keeps an account of the month in the same way, and thus continues for the whole year. At the end of the year he can look back over the whole period, and see in black and white just how he has lived in the matter of personal and family expenses. If his whole salary has been spent, he can see how it was spent; and if a part of it has been saved, he can equally see how he managed to save it.

ELECTRIC TREATMENT.—Mr. C. B. Harness, the president of the British Association of Medical Electricians, has just returned from the Continent, having thoroughly investigated both Professor Charcot's and Dr. Vigouroux's world-renowned systems of electrical treatment. During his stay he was entertained by the leading medical and scientific authorities, and was awarded a gold medal by the electro-medical Institute of France, for his many valuable inventions and publications and for the remarkable success which has attended his "Electro-pathic" and "Electro-Massage" forms of treatment in this country. The valuable and ingenious inventions of Mr. Harness, and the elaborate and beautifully-fitted operating and consulting rooms at the Company's extensive "Electropathic" Establishment are indeed a wonderful example of the rapid strides made during the past few years in the science of medical electricity, and this magnificent building in Oxford Street is now one of the most interesting sights of London. We would advise visitors from the country and others to call and personally inspect the premises and have the various electropathic appliances and electrical batteries explained to them free of charge. We understand that Mr. Harness, with his usual indefatigable energy, is negotiating for the establishment of a Free Hospital for his special system of "electropathic" treatment.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**W. T. Furs** are variously dyed according to the demand and taste of the time.

**YOUNG MAN.**—Leave nature alone; the preparations usually sold are very injurious.

**H. S. W.**—Petroleum pomade is recommended to promote the growth of moustaches.

**A. N. B.**—We cannot aid you unless you state the material from which the stains are to be removed.

**H. N.**—Two parts of dry chloride of lime mixed with one part of burnt alum will make a good disinfecting powder. Set in shallow dishes in rooms, &c.

**F. L. J.**—To cleanse a chamois skin, wash it in cold water with plenty of soap, and rinse it well also in cold water. It may thus be kept soft and always ready for use.

**M. M.**—Touch the wart every morning with a camel's hair brush dipped in nitric acid, but be sure that the acid does not touch the surrounding skin, as it acts as a caustic.

**B. D. F.**—Cinchona is a white crystalline substance obtained from Peruvian bark. It is sometimes used as a substitute for quinine, in doses of from one to four grains, three times a day.

**E. S. N.**—Custom has fixed the daily number of meals to three, but four would not be too many if the amount of food taken at each meal were less. It is important, though, that meals be taken at regular hours.

**MAGGIE.**—1. Plaid costumes are fashionable. 2. Coloured vests are worn with fancy fall wraps, but black velvet is by far the better choice for those whose means are limited, as it looks well with costumes of any colour.

**J. T.**—Unable to enlighten you to the extent requested. The specimens seem to contain some mineral properties, but what percentage we cannot say. We suggest an analysis of them by some one who has made a study of the subject.

**JESSICA.**—Syrup of iodide of iron is a preparation of iodine and iron, and is given in all debilitated conditions of the system, when there is a taint of scrofula. Dose, from twenty to fifty drops, well diluted, at the moment of taking, with water.

**ONLY DAUGHTER.**—1. Plenty of exercise, attention to diet, avoiding all substances containing starch and sugar. 2. Prepared chalk is as good and simple a dentifrice as can be used. 3. Moderate. 4. No difference at all. 5. Too unformed.

**NETTA.**—Among newshades in autumn gloves there are shown golden tan colours, copper shades stitched with green or black, a new Egyptian red, oxidized silver, mahogany, blood orange, a genuine brick colour, and several shades of green.

**M. S. N.**—The part of the water-melon referred to is called the rind. For instance, the Caroline water-melon is thus described: Fruit very large, oblong. Skin dark green and white marbled. Rind thick. Flesh deep red, hollow at the centre, sweet and good. Seeds large, black. 2. No marked individuality is denoted by either.

**L. M. A.**—A so-called country pudding is made as follows: Take eight eggs, leaving out half of the whites, the weight of all the eggs in sugar, and of six in flour, or Indian meal, sifted, one nutmeg, and half a pound of butter, creamed. Mix all well together, and bake for two hours. It becomes light with very little beating. Serve with wine sauce.

**NELLIE LE CHEN.**—We applaud your resolution strongly, and will do all in our power to help you. At your age the best way to improve your spelling is to get some one to read aloud to you and write down from dictation. For the arithmetic get *Barnard Smith*, and for the other matter any of the little manuals on etiquette to be had for a few pence will serve your purpose.

**A. L. C.**—The cat monkey lives in the East Indian Archipelago, and is thought to constitute the connecting link between the monkey and the bat. It has a membrane, which, like that of the flying squirrel, serves as a parachute to sustain it in its leaps from tree to tree for a distance of 100 yards. Its movements on the ground are said to be awkward. It is very active at night. It is also known as the flying lemur.

**MARIE J.**—1. Skirts of plaid dresses are always out on the bias. 2. Despite all predictions to the contrary, bustles are not abandoned, but are simply reduced in size, and worn lower. 3. The pointed bodice and belted waist are the two styles of corset most popular with plain round skirts without drapery. 4. Cashmere coloured ribbons, in wide widths, are used for vests, plastrons, and insertions, in both black and dark silk dresses.

**M. F. W.**—1. Little girls wear foulard frocks of all colours, and they are generally made as follows: The skirt is trimmed with tucks. In the lower part, the bodice is made in the shape of a full chemise, falling loose about the waist, and is finished with a sailor collar, which remains a little open at the neck, thus giving it a pretty effect. 2. The large Leghorn hat is quite as fashionable for little girls as it is for ladies, and it is extremely graceful, with its broad, drooping brim, and low crown, along which curls a long white Amazon feather. 3. Two cloths in different tones of the same colour are frequently used together in one costume, the light shade being always employed for the underskirt and trimmings.

**B. J. N.**—In general terms, the sapphire is blue and the amethyst is violet. But the sapphire is of various colours, and receives various names, according to the colour. The red sapphire is the oriental ruby; the yellow, the oriental topaz; the green, the oriental emerald. The term "sapphire," when used alone, is commonly applied to the blue variety of the stone, the shade of which is somewhat lighter than that of the amethyst stone, which is a bluish violet.

**H. N.—Madame Grisi**, the celebrated Italian singer, was twice married. In 1836 she married in London M. de Meloy, but retained in her profession her maiden name. The marriage proved unhappy and was judicially dissolved. She subsequently married Maria. She was born in Milan in 1812, and was the daughter of Gaetano Grisi, who was officer of Engineers. Grassini, a famous singer, was her aunt, and her eldest sister, Guiditta—also celebrated—assisted her in her musical studies.

**W. J. J.**—A rising against constituted authorities is at first a rebellion. If put down, a rebellion it remains; but should it be successful, it becomes a revolution. To the idea of rebellion a stigma is always attached; but a revolution is a respectable thing. So much is the difference between failure and success. This is the principle involved in the trite adage

Treason doth never prosper, what's the reason?  
Why if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

**TRALEE READER.**—1. The first Russian newspaper was published in 1704. It is said that Peter the Great not only took part personally in its editorial composition, but in correcting proofs, as appears from the sheets still in existence, in which are marks and alterations in his own hand. There are two complete copies of the first year's edition of this paper in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. 2. Peter the Great also fixed the alphabet of the common Russian language, superintended at Amsterdam the casting of the first types, and gave to a printer of Amsterdam, who in 1699 published the first book in the Russian language, the monopoly of printing Russian books for fifteen years. 3. The father of the modern Russian language was Lomonosoff. He wrote the first critical Russian grammar. 4. The first dramatic writer of note was Sumarokoff, who also wrote historical and other poetical works.

## TO WIFE.

You thought it not too much to bring,  
Oh, gentle wife, in early spring,

The spring-time of your wedded life—  
When every hour with joy was rife—

You thought it not too much, I say,  
To bring a sacrifice each day,

And place it on the altar fair  
Of home, and keep it burning there!

You thought it not too much to give  
The gliding minutes and the hours

To make him happy, and to strew  
His pathway with the brightest flowers.

Then while his care is round you still,  
And while his love your life adorns,

Why should you now claim all the flowers,  
And leave to him the sharpest thorns?

You thought it not too much to check  
The tears and fall upon his neck.

When'er some slight cloud came to dim  
Your love-light, and your faith in him!

Then while he labours on for you,  
Still good and faithful, fond and true,

Why listen to the tempter's wiles?  
Why give him frowns instead of smiles?

M. M.

**V. N. W. R.**—The water-mark in paper is produced by wires bent into the shape of the required letter or device, and screwed to the surface of the mould. It has the effect of making the paper thinner in those places. The old makers employed water-marks of various kinds. Those of Caxton and other early printers were an ox-head and a dog's head, a crown, a shield, a pig, &c. A fox's cap and bell gave the name to foolscap paper. A postman's horn gave the name to post paper.

**ROSEBUD.**—If you are not joking you are a very forward girl, and seem very likely to develop into that detestable character, a pronounced flirt. Think more of your studies than of young men and special licences. At fifteen you should be a scholar, and judging from your note you are as deficient in education as you are in common sense. Take what we say to heart, and you can gather from it what we think of you quite independently of your handwriting, which is a disgrace to a girl of your age.

**ANGELA B.**—Prepared chalk is the only form in which chalk is used in medicine. It is an excellent antacid, and is admirably adapted to disperse, accompanied with acidity. The most convenient form of administering chalk is that of the chalk mixture, which consists of prepared chalk, half an ounce; sugar and powdered gum arabic, two drachms each; cinnamon water and water, four fluid ounces each, and rubbed together in a mortar until they are thoroughly mixed. Dose, a tablespoonful frequently repeated.

**ONE IN DOUBT.**—The answer to your questions depend on the fact whether you really love the man and think you could be happy with no other. If so, win him; if it is a mere matter of policy and your heart is not thoroughly in the matter, there are all the elements of unhappiness. Remember what Coventry Patmore so wisely says:—

"Maid choosing man remember this,  
You take his nature with his name,  
And ask what his religion is,  
For you will soon be of the same!"

**M. P. C.**—It is true, as stated, that an idea prevails that the free use of vinegar promotes leanness. However the fact may be, the experiment of reducing corpulence in this way may lead to a disordered state of the stomach which it may take some time to correct. As often stated, the diet best fitted for corpulence is that containing the least oil, starch, or sugar. Lean meat is a good diet for fat people. Much drinking should be avoided. Systematic exercise is also recommended to all who are inclined to obesity.

**L. D. V.**—To pickle cucumbers, say fifty in number, take an eighth of a pound of good white mustard seed, half a stock of horseradish, half an ounce of cloves, a quarter of an ounce of mace, half an ounce of allspice, three onions, half an ounce of whole black pepper, and half an ounce of ginger. Put these spices upon the cucumbers, and fill up with cold vinegar. Let the cucumbers lie in salt and water for twenty-four hours, to draw out all the green. Then throw them into cold water. Wipe them dry, and then add the spices. Half-an-hour is long enough for them to remain in cold water.

**B. B. W.**—A simple recipe for making grape wine is the following: Put twenty pounds of ripe, fresh-picked, and well-selected grapes into a stone jar, and pour on them six quarts of boiling water. When the water has cooled enough, squeeze the grapes well with the hand. Cover the jar with a cloth, and let it stand for three days. Then press out the juice, and add ten pounds of crushed sugar. After it has stood for a week, strain, and bottle it, corking loosely. When the fermentation is complete, strain it again and bottle it, corking tightly. Lay the bottles on their sides in a cool place.

**WORRIED.**—His father should make him come home at a stated hour, or else not let him go out at all, if he has the moral or physical power so to control his son; if not, the parents of that "boy" should notify him that their door would be locked at ten o'clock every evening, and that after that hour it would not be opened to him until the next morning. Having given him this notification, nothing will remain for them but to carry it out unflinchingly. A young fellow who is willing to keep his mother up to an unreasonable hour to let him in, is a low-bred, mean-spirited person, just fit to be left out in the cold these autumnal nights.

**B. C. S.**—Flashy women should wear straight skirts, with no drapery on the hips, while a judicious use of loose fronts will help them more than steels and close fitting. Stout women should never wear a belt or girdle, or a basque, or any garment which makes a break at the waist all the way round. They want the longest lines they can get and the most graceful curves, and should avoid anything which breaks up the staid into parts. The *les-gens* does not suit exactly, but it is very generally built upon the model of a loose-fronted princess robe, and some modifications of the latter robe is the stout woman's fit attire.

**G. M. G.**—*Myllitta* is the Greek name of the Babylonian goddess *Beltis* or *Belt*, "the Lady." She is commonly represented as the wife of *Bel-Nimrod* (*Belus*), and the mother of his son *Nin*, though she is also called the wife of her son *Nin*. She united the characteristics of the *Juno*, *Venus*, and *Diana* of classical mythology, but was chiefly the goddess of birth and fertility. She had temples at *Nineveh*, *Ur*, *Erech*, *Nipur*, and *Babylon*. The *Baalitis* of the *Phoenicians* was the same in name and character. The young women of *Byblos*, like those of *Babylon*, sacrificed themselves in her service, and all their offerings were bestowed on the temple of the goddess.

**A. A. C.**—Rainbows are sometimes formed at night by the moonlight; but they are not so bright as those seen in the daytime. They are called *lunar rainbows*, and are usually single and often white; when coloured, as stated, they are but faintly so. Most rainbows are seen in the afternoon, when the sun is in the west, and rain-clouds come from the west and clear up by passing off to the east; but sometimes one is seen in the morning. A partial bow may be observed at times in drops of dew or rain upon herbage or grass. When the field of rain is large and the light thrown on it is bright, a second bow is seen, one outside of the other. The inner or primary bow is always the brighter, and the red band of colour is always on the outside. The outer or secondary bow is much fainter in colour, and the red band is always on the inside. This is because, as before explained, in the primary bow the sun's rays are only reflected once, while in the secondary bow they are reflected twice, which makes them fainter in colour, and turns them upside down. If the sun and the rain are in the same direction from us, no rainbow can be seen.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. B. SPECK; and printed by WOODFALL and KNEVELL, 79 to 78, Long Acre, W.C.